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THE EPISTLES

OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TRANSLATED.

VOL. IV.

THE EPISTLES

OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TRANSLATED,

WITH

AN EXPOSITION, AND NOTES,

BY THE REV. THOMAS BELSHAM,

MINISTER OF ESSEX-STREET CHAPEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

"*Affer animum rectum et simplicem, veritatis supra cætera amantem,*
"*præjudiciis vacuum. Ne protinus tanquam nova, tanquam inaudita et*
"*absurda damnaveris, quæ tibi nova, tibi inaudita, et absurda occurrent.*
"*Ea quæ dicimus, non cum aliorum judiciis, non cum vulgi inveteratis*
"*opinionibus compone, ut inde rem æstimes, sed cum autoris divini verbis,*
"*scopo, ipsoque rationis filo. Hinc tibi veritas petenda est: hinc de nobis*
"*ferenda sententia. Equidem nos sicubi lapsi, aut D. Autoris mentem non*
"*satis assecuti sumus, amice admoniti, ultro manus dabimus, gratesque in-*
"*super accumulabimus.*" SLICHTINGIUS Præf. ad Heb.

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THE FIRST EPISTLE

OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE THESSALONIANS.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THESSALONICA was a very considerable maritime town, a place of great trade and opulence, and the metropolis of Macedonia. Its ancient name was Thermæ, and it stood upon the Thermæan Bay; but having been rebuilt and enlarged by Philip King of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, he gave it the name of Thessalonica, in commemoration of a great victory which he had obtained over the Thessalians. It is now called Saloniki; and is to this day a place of considerable trade, and in possession of the Turks.

A.D. 51, while Paul and Silas, with Luke, Timothy, and other associates, were engaged in preaching the gospel in the Lesser Asia, a vision appeared

to the apostle, inviting him into Macedonia. Regarding this as a divine suggestion, Paul and his companions immediately crossed the sea to Neapolis, and thence advanced to Philippi, a considerable city of that district of Macedonia, where they preached the gospel with great success, and converted many. But Paul having restored to her senses a young woman who was insane, her keepers, who had exhibited her as inspired, and who had enriched themselves by vending her supposed oracles, enraged at their loss, excited the indignation of the magistrates and populace against the apostles, who were severely beaten and imprisoned, without being heard in their own defence. This transaction is related by Luke, who was an eye-witness, and probably a fellow-sufferer, Acts xvi.

After they were set at liberty, and the magistrates, at the requisition of the apostle, had made proper concessions for their illegal and brutal behaviour, Paul and his associates passed on to Thessalonica; and in that city they resumed their ministry with undaunted courage. Three sabbath days they reasoned with the Jews in their synagogue, arguing from the scriptures the Messiahship of Jesus. And not wholly without success; for some even of the Jews believed: but their principal success, at least at the beginning, appears to have been amongst the devout Gentiles and the pious women, who were worshipers of the one true God, Acts xvii. 1—4.

From Luke's history it would be natural to con-

clude, that the apostle and his companions continued no longer than three weeks or a month at Thessalonica; but as it appears from the first epistle to the Thessalonians that the church consisted chiefly of converts from the idolatrous Gentiles, of whom the evangelist makes no mention; also that during the apostle's residence in that city he and his party maintained themselves chiefly by manual occupations, concerning which Luke is also silent; and, further, it being evident from the epistle to the Philippians that these generous converts sent more than once a supply for his relief while he continued at Thessalonica, there can be no doubt that he resided in that city a considerable time, probably some months. At last, the Jews, envying the apostle's success, excited a tumult against him amongst the lower classes of the people, and accused him and his associates, before the magistrates, of treason against the Roman emperor. And though the magistrates, upon inquiry into the case, had the good sense to dismiss the charge, it was found advisable to send away Paul and Silas by night to Beræa, to screen them from the fury of the populace, Acts xvii. 10.

At Beræa the apostle found among the Jews, hearers more candid and inquisitive than those at Thessalonica; and continued prosecuting his ministry with considerable success, both among the Jews and heathen, till a fresh tumult was excited against him and his companions by certain malicious emissaries from the Jews at Thessalonica; in conse-

quence of which Paul immediately left the city, and was conducted to Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy behind, with a strict charge to follow him with all convenient speed, Acts xvii. 15.

With this direction Timothy soon complied; but, for what reason does not appear, Silas did not join the apostle at Athens. During the residence of Paul in this city, and while Timothy was with him, it was the apostle's intention to have visited Thessalonica again in person, and more than once he was upon the point of carrying his resolution into effect, but was prevented by some unknown obstruction; perhaps by the information that it would not be safe for him to return at present. Being, however, impatient to receive intelligence of his persecuted friends, he sent Timothy, his only associate at Athens, to Thessalonica, to bring him some account of their state. In the mean time, the apostle, not meeting with much success at Athens, removed to Corinth about the latter end of the year A.D. 51, Acts xviii. 1; and here he resided and exercised his ministry with great success for nearly two years. Nor was it till after the apostle had been for some time at Corinth that Timothy came to him from Thessalonica in company with Silas. The intelligence which Timothy communicated to the apostle was in the main agreeable, but in part otherwise. Their faith continued firm; but they had fallen into some errors of doctrine, and were imperfect in the practice of Christian morals. And it was in this view of their case, in order to confirm

what was right, and to rectify what was amiss, that the apostle indited this epistle, probably in the spring of A.D. 52[1]; joining with his own the names of Silas and Timothy, who were well known to the Thessalonians as his associates in the ministry of the gospel.

This short but excellent epistle is one of those the genuineness of which has never been called in question. The apostle inscribes it with his own name; and it has from age to age been cited as his, without any hint or suspicion that it could have been the production of any other author. The internal evidence of its authenticity is likewise very strong. The undesigned coincidences with Luke's history, the light which that history and the epistle mutually reflect upon each other, and the consequent support which they afford to each other's authority, are stated very pointedly and forcibly by Dr. Paley[2]. The history illustrates the strong expressions and representations of the epistle, and the epistle supplies the omissions in the history. And the solemn charge at the close of the epistle, "that it should be publicly read to the whole church," is a convincing proof that the writer was no impostor.

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[1] *In the spring of* A.D. 52.] "This epistle," says Dr. Priestley, "was written A.D. 52, and is therefore the oldest writing of any Christian. Being undoubtedly authentic, and not written after, but during the time of the transactions it alludes to, it supplies a most indisputable evidence of the certainty of those facts which necessarily imply the truth of the whole Christian history."

[2] *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. ix.

To which may be added, that the state of things alluded to in the epistle could only have existed in the infancy of the Christian church; and that the pious and benevolent spirit which breathes in every sentence of the epistle, and the tendency of the whole to promote piety and virtue, and the love of truth and goodness, cannot fail to impress upon the mind of the reader the most favourable sentiments of the character of the writer.

It appears from the epistle, that the Thessalonian converts had adhered with great firmness to the Christian faith amidst many dangers and persecutions; that they entertained a great affection for the apostle and his associates, and lived in love and harmony with each other. It nevertheless also appears that they had fallen into some considerable errors concerning the state of the dead; and that the characters of some among them fell very short of the evangelical standard of purity and universal virtue. The main design, therefore, of the apostle in this epistle is, to establish their minds in the profession of the Christian faith; to rectify their errors in points of doctrine; to remind them of the perfection of the Christian morality, and to enforce the practice of universal virtue.

In the prosecution of this design, the apostle, having INTRODUCED the epistle in his usual form, joining likewise the names of Silas and Timothy with his own,

In the FIRST place returns thanks to God for the

great success of the gospel at Thessalonica, in consequence of the miraculous energies by which it was confirmed. He bears witness to the exemplary fortitude and zeal of the Thessalonian converts, and to the high reputation which they had acquired through all the adjacent regions by the astonishing and happy change which they had undergone, in their conversion from heathen idolatry to the belief and profession of the doctrine of Christ. Ch. i. 2—10.

Secondly, The apostle makes a solemn and affecting appeal to the Thessalonians with regard to his own character and conduct during his residence among them. He particularly alludes to the courage with which he exercised his ministry at Thessalonica after the infamous treatment which he had experienced at Philippi: He asserts his absolute freedom from all corrupt motives in preaching the gospel, and particularly from self-interest and ambition: He reminds them of the gentleness of his manners, of his affectionate solicitude for their improvement, of the example of honourable industry which he had set before them, in supporting himself by his own manual labour, and finally, that as he had himself exhibited a just pattern of Christian virtue, so he had strongly inculcated upon them the indispensable necessity of maintaining a character correspondent to their Christian profession. Ch. ii. 1—12.

Thirdly, The apostle thanks God for their cordial reception of the gospel of Christ, and for their

inflexible adherence to it under the persecutions which they endured, which were similar and equal to those which the believing Hebrews suffered from their unconverted countrymen, of whose abandoned character, and approaching doom, he gives an affecting delineation and an alarming warning. Ch. ii. 13—16.

FOURTHLY, The apostle relates, that having been prevented by the violence of persecution from gratifying his earnest desire of making a visit to Thessalonica, and of enjoying the society of friends whose final happiness was the object of his most ardent wish, he had at last determined to send Timothy, his only associate at Athens, to Thessalonica, to visit, to encourage, and to comfort them. And the apostle assures them, that it was a particular object of this evangelist's mission to remove any ill impression which might have been made upon their minds by the persecutions to which he was himself exposed. And being anxious to hear of their state, he expresses the joy he felt at the good tidings which Timothy had brought of their perseverance in the faith, and their affectionate remembrance of him; which he assures them was on his part reciprocal. He earnestly prays that he may be permitted to make them a visit; and in the mean time he expresses his fervent desire that they may improve in mutual affection, in general benevolence and in universal virtue. Ch. ii. 17—iii. 13.

FIFTHLY, The apostle earnestly cautions the Thessalonians against those vices to which the hea-

then were most addicted; and particularly warns them against every species of impurity, as utterly inconsistent with the profession of Christianity.—He also recommends mutual affection and habitual industry. Ch. iv. 1—12.

SIXTHLY, The apostle corrects some erroneous opinions which they appear to have entertained concerning the state of the Christian dead. And having assured them that the great design of the mission of Christ was to reveal the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, of which his own resurrection was a pattern and a proof; he informs them that believers who will be found alive at the final appearance of Christ, will enjoy no advantage over those who are dead. For that the dead will be raised, while those who will then be living are undergoing a necessary change in the constitution of their bodies: and that the whole human race shall bear their part, at the same time, upon this solemn occasion. Ch. iv. 13—18.

SEVENTHLY, The uncertainty of the time of the second appearance of Christ, is urged by the apostle as a powerful motive to vigilance and activity in the discharge of duty. Ch. v. 1—11.

EIGHTHLY, The apostle closes the epistle with practical exhortations. Particularly, he recommends respect and affection to their Christian instructors; a peaceable spirit; tender vigilance over each other; reciprocation of mutual good offices; prayer and thanksgiving; a proper estimation of spiritual gifts, and particularly of prophecy; caution

in judgement, and abhorrence of vice. He then expresses his earnest wish for their perfection in virtue; assuring them, that God will impart every necessary aid for this purpose. And having sent his salutations, and enjoined the public reading of this epistle in the church, he takes leave with his usual apostolical BENEDICTION.

THE FIRST EPISTLE

TO

THE THESSALONIANS.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

THE apostle Paul, joining with his own the names of Silas and Timothy, inscribes the epistle to the church at Thessalonica, ch. i. 1. Ch. I.

PAUL and Silvanus, and Timothy[1], *to the church of the Thessalonians,* who believe *in God the Father*[2], *and in the Lord Jesus Christ, favour be to you, and peace*[3]. Ver. 1.

[1] *Paul and Silvanus, and Timothy.*] Silvanus was unquestionably the same with Silas, and was with the apostle at Corinth when he wrote this epistle, Acts xviii. 5. Indeed the introduction of his name, and that of Timothy, is a proof that the epistle was written from Corinth, and not, as the postscript says, from Athens. Dr. Chandler observes, that "though Paul joins the names of Silas and Timothy with his own, he is far from meaning to represent them as of equal rank and authority." See ch. iii. 2, iv. 2, v. 27. Dr. Benson accounts for Paul not assuming, in the inscription to this epistle, the title of an apostle, by the supposition that his authority had not been called in question at Thessalonica.

[2] *To the church* who believe *in God the Father,* &c.] Dr.

Ch. I. Ver. 1. This epistle is indited by Paul, who is the messenger of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to the idolatrous heathen, and who lately incurred great persecution and hazard in exercising his mission at

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Benson observes, that "the two fundamental articles of Christianity are, that *there is only one living and true God;* and that *Jesus is the Christ,* or the great prophet and saviour of the world. The idolatrous Gentiles believed neither; the Jews and devout Gentiles believed the first; the Christians believed both, and without it they could not have been entitled to Christian communion." To be in God and Jesus Christ, is to believe in God and in Jesus Christ. See 1 John v. 20. Dr. Benson, in his note upon this verse, has given the various senses in which the word *church* is used in the New Testament. He observes, that "the word εκκλησια sometimes signifies any assembly whatever, Acts xix. 32, 39, 40; but is most commonly used in a religious sense. It signifies, 1. All who profess the Christian religion, Acts v. 11, 1 Cor. xii. 28, and other places. 2. Only true and faithful Christians, Eph. i. 22, 23, v. 25, 29; Col. i. 18, 24. This has been called the *true* or *invisible* church, as the preceding is sometimes called the *visible,* the *universal,* or the *catholic* church. 3. Most commonly one assembly or congregation, such as statedly meet together for the worship of God. 4. A family joined together in worshiping God through Jesus Christ. 5. The professed people of God on earth called the church *militant;* and sometimes good men in a state of happiness called the church *triumphant.* Comp. Eph. v. 27 with Eph. v. 23. 6. Qu. Whether *churches,* 1 Cor. xiv. 34, may not signify the *assemblings* of the same Christians at different times for Christian worship? Dr. Benson adds from Le Clerc on 1 Cor. xvi. 19, that using the word "church" for *a place,* was a signification of it wholly unknown in the times of the apostles; in which the word εκκλησια was always used for an *assembly,* as well among the Christians as by the Greeks."

[3] *Favour,* &c.] The words "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," which conclude the sentence in the received text, are omitted in some ancient manuscripts and versions, and are not noticed by the Greek commentators; with Mr. Wakefield, therefore, I leave them out. It is observed that bishops and deacons are not mentioned in this inscription by the apostle, probably because such officers did not then exist among them. See Grotius and Benson.

Thessalonica. With his, are joined the names of Silas and Timothy, his beloved and faithful associates in the ministry of the gospel, and who were also his fellow-labourers and fellow-sufferers in that great and opulent city; who are, therefore, well known to the believers there, and who feel, and are in this way anxious to express, their sympathy and affection for them. And it is inscribed in our united names to the body of professing Christians at Thessalonica, who are distinguished from their heathen neighbours by the knowledge and worship of the one true God, the Father of all mankind, and from both Jews and heathen, by an acknowledgement of Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah, and a professed subjection to him as their teacher and master. And for the dear friends for whose instruction and salvation we have exerted our earnest and united efforts, the best wish that we can form is, that they may enjoy that inward and unspeakable peace and satisfaction which is the genuine fruit of a practical belief in the gospel, that free and precious donation of God to man.

Ch. I. Ver. I.

SECTION I.

Ch. I. *THE APOSTLE expresses his joy and gratitude for the success of the gospel at Thessalonica, and for the great and extensive reputation which the new converts from heathenism had acquired by their fortitude and zeal.* Ch. i. 2—10.

1. The apostle assures them of his grateful and affectionate remembrance of them in his devout addresses to God, ver. 2, 3.

Ver. 2. *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you without ceasing*[1] *in our*
3. *prayers, remembering in the presence of our God and Father*[2], *your active faith, your laborious love*[3], *and your patient expectation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

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[1] *Making mention of you without ceasing.*] Benson, Wakefield, and many other versions and commentators ancient and modern, join αδιαλειπτως (*without ceasing*) to ver. 2. See Rom. i. 9, 10, 2 Tim. i. 3.

[2] *Remembering in the presence*, &c.] So Benson and Chandler. "He remembered these things before God," says Dr. Chandler, "thankful to him that they were wrought in them, and earnestly praying to him that he would continue and establish them."

[3] *Laborious love.*] "the laboriousness of your love." Wakefield. Dr. Chandler observes, that "the original word κοπος signifies difficulties and troubles, and that the apostle means those difficulties and afflictions and dangers to which either their love of Christianity or their peculiar affection to the apostle ex-

Such, my brethren, is our affection for you, and so deeply do we interest ourselves in your conversion to the Christian doctrine, and in your adherence to your profession, that we continually bear you upon our hearts in our daily exercises of devotion. And in the awful presence of that Great Being who vouchsafes to acknowledge the high and endearing relations of a God and Father to the converted Gentile, as well as to the believing Jew, we often reflect with heartfelt satisfaction upon your Christian virtues; upon that faith which is in you a powerful and operative principle productive of good works; upon that love which grudges no toil, and which shuns no dangers for the good of others, and to the generous efforts of which we have ourselves been so much indebted; of that firm expectation of the second appearance of our master Jesus Christ to judge the world and to reward his true disciples, which induces you to undergo with fortitude and cheerfulness the losses and sufferings to which you may now be exposed for his sake. And when we call to mind these distinguished virtues of our Thessalonian brethren, our hearts overflow with gratitude

Ch. I. Ver. 3.

posed them." It is supposed that the apostle here particularly alludes to the care which they took to screen his person when the Jews excited a tumult at Thessalonica, and to their sending him away privately to Berea. Acts xvii. 10. Gr. *work of faith, labour of love, patience of hope.* "Remembering without ceasing before our God and Father, your effectual faith, your laborious painful love, and your patient hope or expectation of the Lord Jesus Christ." Chandler. This construction is not uncommon. Col. i. 22. *The body of his flesh:* i. e. his fleshly body. See also Col. iii. 14, Eph. vi. 12.

Ch. I. Ver. 3. to God, and our lips abound in praises and thanksgivings on your account.

2. The apostle declares that when he first preached the gospel to them, he soon became assured of their right of admission into the family of God, by the proofs which he was enabled to give of his divine mission, and by the success of his ministry; of which facts they were themselves witnesses, ver. 4, 5.

4. *We know*[1], *brethren, beloved of God*[2], *that he*
5. *hath chosen you, because the gospel preached by us came to you, not in word only, but also in power, and in the holy spirit*[3], *and with great conviction*[4],

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[1] *We know,* &c.] *i. e.* we are assured that you are equally with the Jews the beloved and chosen people of God; because our doctrine was confirmed by the holy spirit, and was received by you with full conviction. "The election spoken of," says Dr. Chandler, "is evidently their election to be the church and people of God, to all the privileges and advantages, and means of salvation by Christ, and to eternal life and blessedness, as the great end of their faith. The great question in these early days was, not about any particular secret choice of persons, unconditionally and absolutely to eternal life. This controversy the primitive church knew nothing of; the debate was of another nature, and precisely this: Whether circumcision and the observation of the law of Moses, as well as faith in Christ, were necessary to render the Gentiles equally partakers of the privileges of the kingdom or church of God with the Jews themselves? This the Jews pleaded and persecuted for; and the apostle Paul as strenuously and constantly denied."

[2] *Beloved of God.*] This is the proper arrangement of the words; and not, as in the common version, "your election of God." See Benson, Chandler, Wakefield, Newcome.

[3] *In power, and in the holy spirit.*] "If we did only and barely affirm it, then might our enemies the Jews have reproached and denied it. But it was *in power:* we confirmed it by miraculous

as ye know what kind of persons we were among you for your sakes. Ch. I. Ver. 5.

My dear brethren ; for such I may now justly call

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works. And *in the holy ghost:* we conferred on you the extraordinary gifts of the holy spirit, as the sure evidence of your being made children of God." Chandler. This is unquestionably the apostle's meaning. He constantly refers all his success to his miraculous powers, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5, without which it would have been quite impossible that a doctrine so hostile to the prejudices and to the passions of mankind should have made so rapid and extensive a progress. One is grieved, therefore, that such a critic as Rosenmuller should endeavour to explain away the obvious meaning of the words. " δυναμις και πνευμα ἁγιον, vis *et* spiritus sanctus : *i.e. dotes divinæ, quæ se exserebant in Paulo, dum ea docuit quæ ab hominibus excogitari non poterant. Alii* εν δυναμει *vertunt* miraculis *patrandis: Sed miracula Paulus Thessalonicæ non videtur patrasse. Lege historiam* Act. xvii." Rosenmuller. But Luke's account is very brief. The epistle shows that the apostle's residence and success at Thessalonica far exceeded what is reported in the history.

And let me here be permitted to observe, that whatever learned or speculative men may think or say, a belief in miracles, that is, in certain deviations from the established course and order of nature, or what is sometimes sneeringly called *supernaturalism*, is absolutely indispensable to a belief in the Christian religion. Christianity is itself a miracle ; it is a doctrine supernaturally communicated to the first teachers of it, and it is supported altogether by miracles ; by the resurrection of Jesus, and by the gifts of the holy spirit to him and his apostles. Whoever denies the resurrection of Jesus, or his miraculous powers, must believe him to have been an impostor, and his apostles the wilful abettors of an impious fraud. And for men who cast this imputation upon the first teachers of the gospel to assume the name of Christians is an abuse of language, whatever veneration they may profess for the morality of the gospel, or for the character of its founder, or whatever may be the respectability of their own character.

But, let it be remembered, that though Christianity requires a belief in miracles, it by no means challenges implicit faith. On the contrary, it offers in behalf of its two great miracles, The resurrection of Christ, and The gifts of the holy spirit, a

Ch. I. Ver. 5.

you, since God our common Father has selected you from the idolatrous heathen, has favoured you equally with ourselves with the privileges of the gospel, and has adopted you into his family, and given you his spirit; I assure you that when I first came with my fellow-labourers to preach the gospel at Thessalonica, I entertained great hope of success, and was fully convinced that great numbers in that opulent and populous city would become converts to the Christian doctrine. For whereas, in some places where this doctrine was published, few miracles were permitted to be wrought, and few spiritual gifts were communicated; and whereas I was restrained by a divine impulse from exercising my apostolic mission in other places where I intended to preach, I met with no such discouragements nor

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kind and a degree of historical evidence which never existed in the world before, which exceeds the evidence of any fact recorded in ancient history; which is fully proportioned to the extraordinary nature, the antecedent improbability, and the unspeakable importance of the facts to be proved, and the fallacy of which would be a violation of the laws of the human mind, as real and far more incredible than any of the miracles essential to the support of Christianity are of the laws of matter and the course of nature in the external world.

[4] *With great conviction.*] πληροφορια, ἀ πληροφορεω, *plene fero, metaphora desumta de navibus, cum ventis implentur vela secundis.*" Schleusner. "It signifies," says Dr. Chandler, "the full motion of a ship, with all her sails:" and he understands it "either of the abundant confirmation of the Christian doctrine by the gifts of the holy spirit, or of the full conviction produced by this evidence." "Their readily embracing the gospel," says Dr. Benson, "upon the apostle's preaching and working miracles, and their having thereupon received the spirit, was the surest proof of their election. God imparted the spirit unto none but those who believed; *i. e.* only to his professed people, who were called and chosen."

obstructions when I came to you. But on the contrary I not only plainly taught you the doctrine of Jesus, and argued the divinity of his mission from the prophecies of the Old Testament, which ought to have been satisfactory to the unbelieving Jews; but I was also enabled, in confirmation of the doctrine which I had in charge, to work various splendid miracles by power communicated to me from above; and to impart to the new converts those gifts of the holy spirit, which were to themselves and to others the most satisfactory evidence of a divine authority. And by these means the gospel did, as might naturally be expected, triumph over the opposition of its enemies; and in a short time, like a vessel in full sail and with a prosperous breeze, it made its way with astonishing rapidity and success. Nor is it necessary for me to enter into particular details: you well remember what we were, what we taught, and what wonderful powers we exhibited, in order to excite your attention and to bring you to a proper conviction of the truth of the gospel. Ch. I. Ver. 5.

3. This happy conviction of their acceptance with God was fully confirmed by the exemplary conduct of the Thessalonians after their conversion, ver. 6, 7.

And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord[1], *having received the word amidst great* 6.

[1] *And of the Lord.*] Mr. Wakefield, upon the authority of the Æthiopic version, leaves out και (*and*), and joins τε Κυριε

Ch. I. Ver. 7. *affliction with joy in the holy spirit*[1], *so that ye became examples to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia*[2].

The success of the gospel among you was proportioned to the means employed for your conversion. Some among my own countrymen, and many of the Gentiles who had before been worshipers of the true God, and who might therefore be expected to listen to the discoveries of his will, embraced the gospel. And, what is still more worthy of admiration and joy, great numbers even of idolatrous heathen were deeply impressed with the tokens of divine interposition, and became sincere converts to the Christian faith. Yes, my brethren, you became not only proselytes to my doctrine, but imitators of my example; for I once like you was alienated from the gospel. But why do I speak of myself? you became imitators of Jesus himself, your master and mine, our great ensample, our glorious chief. He was a sufferer before he triumphed; and in the pro-

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to the next clause, which he renders, "receiving the doctrine of the Lord." Griesbach does not notice this various reading.

[1] *Joy in the holy spirit.*] The gifts of the spirit were a proof of their being the children of God, or his chosen people; and were likewise the pledge of their title to immortality. "Well, therefore," says Dr. Benson, "might it cause them to rejoice, even in the midst of persecution, Acts v. 41; Rom. xii. 12; Eph. i. 13, 14; Col. i. 11; Rom. viii. 14—17." "Cum gaudio magno, *cum lætitia quæ esset a spiritu sancto effecta, sive, nata ex evangelio quod Paulus Thessalonicensibus tradidisset.*" Rosenmuller.

[2] *Macedonia and Achaia.*] The whole of the countries possessed by the Greeks in Europe were by the Romans reduced to two provinces, Macedonia and Achaia. See Dr. Macknight.

spect of the reward set before him, he bore the cross and despised the shame. You are his faithful followers: you profess his doctrine amidst dangers and persecutions. But, possessed of those gifts of the holy spirit, which are a sure pledge of the truth of the gospel, and of the accomplishment of your glorious expectations, you rejoice even in tribulation. So that you are yourselves become shining examples to the neighbouring churches of the excellence and energy of Christian principles. Ch. I. Ver. 7.

4. The apostle expresses great satisfaction in the high reputation which the Thessalonian converts had gained by their faith, their fortitude, and zeal, ver. 8—10.

For, from you hath the word of the Lord resounded[3], *not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith towards God hath spread abroad, so that we need not to say any thing* concerning it: *For they themselves declare concerning us*[4] *what kind of entrance we had among you; and* 8. 9.

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[3] *Resounded.*] Grotius observes, that many of the Thessalonians were merchants who travelled into foreign parts for the sake of commerce, and who would naturally spread the intelligence of the extraordinary events which had happened at Thessalonica, of the impression which had been made upon the minds of many of their countrymen, and of the great change which it had produced in their conduct.

[4] *They themselves,* &c.] " that is," says Dr. Chandler, " those of Macedonia and Achaia, and other places who know of your conversion: they show of us, απαγγελλουσι, publish and declare concerning us to others, in what manner and with what evidence we preached the gospel to you." " Those who were

Ch. I. Ver. 10. *how ye turned to God*[1] *from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to expect his Son from heaven whom he raised from the dead; even Jesus, who is our deliverer from impending wrath*[2].

The beneficial influence of your example has diffused itself far and wide. For truly, my Christian brethren, the extraordinary change produced in you by the preaching of the gospel, has not only excited the astonishment of your heathen neighbours and your fellow-citizens of every description, but it has been proclaimed abroad through all the adjacent countries, and is become the topic of general conversation and wonder. In our progress from place to place, in the accomplishment of our apostolic mission, it is our usual practice to relate in the towns and cities to which we come, and where we are about to open our ministry, the success which we have met with in those regions through which we have already passed. But with regard to Thessalonica this is quite unnecessary. The report of

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with us declare what kind of an admission," &c. "αυτοι περι ἡμων." Philalethes.

[1] *And how ye turned to God.*] Dr. Benson observes, that "the two fundamental articles of Christianity are here again repeated."

[2] *Impending wrath.*] της οργης της ερχομενης. "impending anger." Philalethes. "the punishment which is to come." Newcome. "who shall hereafter save us (ῥυσομενον is the reading of some copies) from that wrath that shall finally come upon all who do not believe nor obey the gospel." Chandler. N.B. Griesbach takes no notice of the various reading which Dr. Chandler suggests. "*Hic præsens pro futuro, bis.* ῥυομενον *pro* ῥυσομενον, *deinde* ερχομενης, *pro* venturæ." Rosenmuller.

your conversion to the Christian faith has every where anticipated our intelligence. For whithersoever the citizens of your opulent and populous metropolis are led, either by the affairs of government, or the concerns of commerce, or upon their own private business or amusement, they are all eager to relate the wonderful events which have lately taken place among you. And in particular they recount our appearance in your city, our public teaching, and our extraordinary works; to which they subjoin the amazing change of views, principles, and conduct which this new doctrine and these surprising works have produced upon their fellow-citizens; so that great numbers have been prevailed upon to forsake the religion of their country, and the customs of their ancestors, to abandon the worship of the heathen gods, and the deified heroes, in order to devote themselves to the worship and service of the one true God: of that glorious and eternal Being, who is the maker of heaven and earth, and all things therein, and who is the only proper object of religious adoration. And they further report, as a remarkable singularity in the character of these new proselytes, that they all profess to live under the awful expectation of the speedy appearance of a glorious person whom they call their Master and Lord, who, having suffered a violent death as a witness to the truth, was by the power of God raised from the grave, and thus declared to be his first-born Son; who afterwards ascended to the right hand of God, and is constituted

Ch. I. Ver. 10.

Ch. I. Ver. 10. by his heavenly Father the judge both of the living and the dead; and that the name of this holy and exalted person is Jesus of Nazareth; who will also most assuredly rescue all who receive and obey his gospel from that vengeance which will in due time inevitably fall upon those who are immersed in the gross and odious vices which prevail in so lamentable a degree in the heathen world. This, my Christian brethren, is the report which is every where circulated concerning you; a report which is highly to your credit; and which affords us, your teachers, and your affectionate faithful friends, the most heartfelt satisfaction. And I now mention it to you, that you may be stimulated by it to support the honourable character which you have so justly acquired, and to persevere in your adherence to the Christian faith, and in the practice of Christian virtue.

SECTION II.

Ch. II. *THE APOSTLE asserts the fidelity, the purity, the affection, and disinterestedness with which he and his associates had preached the gospel at Thessalonica, and he appeals to the Thessalonians, and to the Supreme Being himself, to attest the veracity of his declaration.* Ch. ii. 1—12.

1. He reminds them of the courage with which

he and his associates opened their ministry at Thessalonica, after the injurious and contumelious treatment which they had endured at Philippi, ver. 1, 2. Ch. II.

For yourselves, brethren, know that our entering in among you was not in vain[1]. *But though we had before suffered, and had been ignominiously treated*[2], *as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God*[3] *to declare to you the gospel of God*[4], *amidst great opposition*[5]. Ver. 1. 2.

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[1] *In vain.*] "κενη, without influence on your belief, ch. i. 9; and on your practice, ch. i. 7, 8, ii. 13, 14." Newcome. Chandler observes that the word signifies either fruitless or deceitful: in the former sense it connects with the last verses in the foregoing chapter, and in the latter sense with the verse immediately following.

[2] *Ignominiously treated.*] ὑβρισθεντες, "had suffered bodily injury." Wakefield. The history of this infamous usage is given, Acts xvi., and the judicious reader will observe how the history and the epistle illustrate and confirm each other. It was considered as the highest indignity to beat a Roman citizen with rods, and the Porcian law expressly exempted them from it. One of the heaviest charges of Cicero against Verres is the frequent inflicting of this disgraceful punishment upon Roman citizens. See Chandler on the text.

[3] *Bold in our God.*] επαρρησιασαμεθα. "This word," says Dr. Chandler, "sometimes signifies, 'to speak with courage, and void of fear;' sometimes, 'to speak openly and plainly, without ambiguity or disguise;' sometimes, 'to speak in the most public manner before others;' and sometimes, 'to speak with full persuasion and confidence of encouragement and support;' and the word seems to take in all these kindred senses, which the history also justifies, Acts xvii. 1—3." *In* our *God.* "The gods of the heathen," as Dr. Benson observes, "were not able to inspire their votaries with such courage and constancy in promoting religion and virtue."

[4] *We were bold in our God to declare the gospel of God.*] "The repetition of the word *God* is truly emphatical, and with the highest elegance and propriety." Chandler.

[5] *Amidst great opposition.*] εν πολλῳ αγωνι. "with much

Ch. II. Ver. 2.

You cannot, my friends, be surprised that the circumstances of our mission among you, and of the extraordinary success which attended it, should have become, as I have just mentioned to you, the topics of general conversation through all the neighbouring countries; for you yourselves well recollect all the circumstances of it, both with respect to the character and conduct of the teachers, and the number and zeal of the converts to their new and sublime doctrine. You know that we neither came with false pretences to a divine authority, nor were our labours among you ineffectual and fruitless. You had heard of the savage cruelty with which we had been treated at Philippi; and how, though we were Roman citizens, the magistrates had presumed to violate our sacred privileges by inflicting stripes upon us, and that even without hearing what we had to say in our own defence. And when, sensible of their misconduct, they requested us to depart, we came immediately to Thessalonica; and, while we were yet smarting with the wounds we had received at Philippi, we boldly, publicly, and without any artifice or disguise, as became the messengers of the God of truth, taught at Thessalonica the same novel and obnoxious doctrine for which we had lately suffered so much at Philippi. And in the exercise of our ministry among you we

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earnestness." Newcome. "in so great a struggle." Wakefield. "in much danger." Chrysostom, Erasmus, Grotius, Benson, Raphelius. "The word signifies 'great opposition,' or, 'great hazard.' Phil. i. 30." Chandler.

met, as usual, with great opposition: first from the Jews, and afterwards, at their instigation, from the heathen rabble; in consequence of which we were exposed to great hazard, and ultimately obliged to withdraw from the city. And you cannot but have remarked that the part which we have acted is very different from that which the boastful teachers of the heathen philosophy would have done in similar circumstances. The reason is, that we placed our confidence not in senseless idols, but in a God who is omnipotent to protect his faithful servants; and in publishing to you the joyful tidings of salvation we were conscious that we were acting in obedience to his authority, and fulfilling the high commission with which we were intrusted. Ch. II. Ver. 2.

2. The apostle asserts the competency, the purity, and the veracity of himself and his associates in the ministry of the gospel, ver. 3, 4.

For, our exhortation was *not of error*[1], *nor of impurity*[2], *nor with deceit*[3]. *But as we were ap-* 3. 4.

[1] *Of error.*] πλανης. "we ourselves being deceived." Newcome. Dr. Chandler observes, that "in these and the following verses the apostle plainly refers to certain teachers who were chargeable with these immoral views and practices;" and he supposes that the heathen philosophers are principally, if not solely, alluded to, both as the Thessalonian Christians, being chiefly converted heathen, must be ignorant of Jewish controversies, and because "these words are the plainest description that can be of the generality of the heathen philosophers, who were chargeable with every one of the corrupt and the mean practices which the apostle disclaims."

[2] *Nor of impurity.*] "nor with impure and sensual doctrines or views. See 2 Pet. ii. 10, 14; Jude 4, 8; Rev. ii. 6, 15. Ham-

Ch. II. Ver. 4. *proved by God*[4] *to be intrusted with the gospel, we speak accordingly, not to please men*[5], *but that God who approveth our hearts*[6].

The characters of those who profess to teach the fashionable systems of heathen philosophy are sufficiently notorious. Many of them are themselves bewildered in the labyrinths of error. Many of them, both by their instruction and their conduct, countenance the most licentious and abominable practices; and many, to please their hearers, teach

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mond, Wall." Newcome. "The philosophers were in these respects infamously criminal." Chandler. Some by ακαθαρσιας understand *insincerity* only, and Bentley conjectures that the true reading is ανθρωπαρεσκιας, *men-pleasing*, as better suiting the connexion; but this reading is unauthorized, and the preceding interpretation is unusual, and both are unnecessary. See Benson and Bowyer.

[3] *Nor with deceit.*] εν δολω, "not with an intention to deceive others." Newcome.—"Lucian says of the philosophers, that the impudence of their hypocrisy was intolerable." Chandler.—"They used no craft or artifice; did not artfully conceal some parts and adulterate others; did not assert the necessity of the Gentile Christians observing the law of Moses in order to please the Jews; did not model Christianity according to the old heathen religion, or contrive methods to make them easy in their vices, to draw in the Gentiles." Benson.

[4] *Approved by God.*] δεδοκιμασμεθα. "This word," says Dr. Chandler, "has a stronger signification than that of mere allowance, and denotes fully to approve." See Rom. i. 28, xiv. 22.

[5] *To please men.*] "St. Paul strove to please men as far as he could honestly, and for their real good, Rom. xv. 2, 1 Cor. x. 33; but he never studied to please men, when thereby he must have been unfaithful, and displeased God. Gal. i. 10; 1 Cor. iv. 1, vii. 25." Benson.

[6] *Who approveth,* &c.] "The word is the same as before, and should be rendered, *who approveth our hearts:* who knows the simplicity of our views, and approveth them." Chandler.

doctrines which they themselves do not believe. In short, they are influenced by the most selfish motives, and consider themselves as accountable to no one for their conduct. But this, you well know, was not our character. Whatever our enemies may believe or report concerning us, we are conscious that our doctrine is of divine authority. No indulgence was granted by us to that dissoluteness of manners which is so prevalent in the heathen world. Nor did we dare to conceal or to disguise any part of the message which we had in charge, in order to make it more palatable to our hearers. But having had the unspeakable honour of being selected by God himself, as proper instruments to be employed by him in publishing the joyful tidings of peace and good-will to mankind, we strenuously exert ourselves to maintain this honourable character, and to perform, with the strictest fidelity, the duties of our important office. And with this object fully and continually in view, though we do not desire to give unnecessary offence, and are even anxious, as far as may be consistent with duty, to gratify the taste and to conform to the innocent prejudices of our hearers; yet, upon the whole, we feel little solicitude for human applause, and are supremely desirous of approving ourselves to Him who is witness to all the thoughts and purposes of the heart; who is the only infallible judge of character, and in whose sight we cheerfully hope that our conduct is regarded with complacency, however we may be censured and condemned by men.

Ch. II. Ver. 4.

CH. II. 3. The apostle further affirms that neither he nor his associates were influenced by pride, covetousness, or vain-glory, in preaching the gospel at Thessalonica, ver. 5—7.

VER. 5. *For neither at any time*[1] *did we use flattering*
speech[2], *as ye know, nor a pretence for covetous-*
6. *ness, God is witness*[3]. *Nor from men sought we*
7. *glory; neither from you, nor from others*[4]. *When*

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[1] *For neither at any time.*] Dr. Benson supposes, that the apostle had been charged by his enemies with the faults of which he clears himself in the beginning of this chapter, viz. of imposture, impurity, guile, flattery, covetousness and vain-glory.

[2] *Use flattering speech.*] εν λογῳ κολακειας εγενηθημεν· "a very correct and emphatical manner of writing. It signifies, either to use flattering speeches, or to be reported of as given to flattery: *q. d.* you neither heard me doing it, nor ever charged me with it." Chandler. Benson's interpretation is preferable; which he says "is the sense usually given by all commentators, ancient and modern." And he justly asks, "what occasion there was for his solemn appeal to the Thessalonians themselves (*as ye know*) if some persons had not suggested such accusations." He does not say, as Dr. Chandler (who is unaccountably prejudiced against Dr. Benson) insinuates, that the construction given by Hammond, Le Clerc, and Chandler, is bad Greek; but he has said and proved that the passages they quote do not justify the sense they give to the apostle's language. And surely, when the words of the text admit of two senses, Dr. Chandler's usual method of attributing both to the apostle cannot generally be correct.

[3] *As ye know—God is witness.*] How far the apostle had flattered his hearers, they themselves could testify; but how far he was influenced by avarice and self-interest, while he pretended to have no object in view but the benefit of his hearers, could be known only to God.—"προφασις," says Dr. Chandler, "is a *pretence*, or *colour* to cover over, and more securely carry on, any secret design. The philosophers were notorious and infamous for their covetousness."

[4] *Neither from you, nor from others.*] "If his enemies objected," says Dr. Benson, "'Though you sought not glory from

we might have assumed authority[5] *as apostles of Christ, we were gentle*[6] *among you.* Ch. II. Ver. 7.

There are some teachers who are desirous at any price to secure the applause and the favour of their hearers; there are others whose object is to enrich themselves at their expense; and there are some who are ambitious of the reputation of superior talents, and the pride of rank and dignity; and there are not wanting those who have accused us of being governed by a similar spirit. These charges we repel with indignation; and we appeal to you, and to God himself, to attest our innocence. Much as we loved you, and earnestly desirous as we were to gain your attention and your affection, you will bear us

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the Thessalonians, yet you love the admiration and applause of mankind,' to such an objection the apostle replies by denying the charge. And indeed that would have been but a poor reward for all their astonishing labours, and great fatigues, their cold, hunger and nakedness, their buffetings and scourgings, their insults, dangers, and the many and grievous sufferings to which their faithful and assiduous preaching of the gospel exposed them."

[5] *Assumed authority.*] εν βαρει ειναι. Dr. Benson and Dr. Chandler have shown that βαρος is used by classical writers to express gravity, dignity, and authority; and this sense is unquestionably best suited to the connexion. Dr. Chandler remarks that the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses are ill pointed; "and by this means (says he) one of the most beautiful and moving passages I ever met with in the whole course of my reading is almost quite kept out of the reader's view." He rectifies the punctuation, which is also adopted by Griesbach, and which I have followed.

[6] *Gentle.*] ηπιοι· "This word," says Dr. Chandler, "signifies *humane, indulgent.* Profane writers make it the epithet of a father, to signify the most indulgent and affectionate father. Helena, speaking of Hector, says of him, πατηρ ὡς ηπιος αιει. *Iliad.* Ω. ver. 770.

Ch. II. Ver. 7. witness that we never attempted to secure this object by any mean compliances with your humours and prejudices, or by flattering you in your errors and your vices. And that we did not, under pretence of instructing you in the Christian doctrine, and teaching you the way of salvation, mean to make a gain of you, and to become rich by your liberality, God is witness, who knows the disinterested spirit with which we have embarked in this glorious service. And we were equally clear of the imputation of ambition and the desire of applause. We did not court the admiration either of you or the public. We were above such unworthy motives. Indeed, as an apostle of Christ, who received my commission immediately from him, who possessed supernatural gifts and powers in a degree equal to the very chief of the apostles, and who was particularly designated to the high office of apostle of the Gentiles, I might very consistently have claimed the respect due to my superior rank. But this was not my ambition. I chose to associate among you as an equal and a friend, or rather, as an indulgent father. And, instead of affecting airs of superiority, I was mild and gentle in my behaviour to you all.

4. The apostle reminds the Thessalonians that his whole conduct towards them was, in the highest degree, affectionate and kind, ver. 7, 8.

8. *As a nursing-mother*[1] *cherishes*[2] *her own chil-*

[1] *As a nursing-mother.*] So Mr. Wakefield; and it is evident,

dren, so we, affectionately loving you[3], *would with pleasure*[4] *have imparted to you, not the gospel of God only, but even our own lives, because ye were dear to us*[5]. Ch. II. Ver. 8.

Indeed, my friends, so far was I from desiring to usurp any undue authority over you, that I felt no emotions towards you but those of kindness and compassion. I even felt for you as a tender mo-

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as all must observe who consult the original, that the apostle is speaking of a mother who nurses and suckles her own child. See Benson and Macknight.

[3] *Cherishes.*] θαλπῃ. "The Greek," says Dr. Chandler, "is more emphatical than our translation, 'cherishes and suckles her own children, warms them in her bosom, and feeds them with her milk.'"

[3] *Affectionately loving you.*] ἱμειρομενοι. "ἱμειρει, επιθυμει, θελει. *Hesych. Non tantum a poetis usurpatur, ut vult Grotius. Vid. Raphel.*" Chandler.

[4] *Would with pleasure.*] ευδοκεμεν. See Chandler.

[5] *Ye were dear to us.*] "How tender, how engaging (says Dr. Chandler) are these expressions of this divine apostle! The fondness of an indulgent father to his children is very great: the tenderness of a mother is yet stronger. It is peculiarly strong to their tender infants, but strongest of all to them when they cherish and warm them in their bosoms, and especially when they hang upon the breast, and are suckled with their milk. Nature cannot furnish out an image of greater tenderness than this: such was our apostle to his Thessalonians. He considers *them* as in the infancy of their conversion; himself as the tender mother nourishing and cherishing them; *the gospel of God* as the milk with which he fed them; his *very soul and life* as what he was willing to part with for their safety and benefit. He could die for them, if their preservation and welfare required it. Could the fondest passion of the tenderest mother carry her further, or prompt her to do more for the helpless infant drawing in life and warmth and nourishment from her breast? I think nothing can exceed the elegance, the strength, the tender passion, the moving affection of this description; and that a man must have no bowels that does not find them moved, by so fine, so lively, and warm a scene."

Ch. II. Ver. 8. ther for the helpless infant at her breast; who not only delights to impart to her beloved babe the warmth and nourishment that it needs, but would also, with pleasure, sacrifice her own life for the preservation of her child. So, likewise, did I, animated with equal tenderness and affection for you, first impart to you, in the midst of difficulties and dangers, the sincere milk of the gospel, the word of truth and salvation; and with equal pleasure would I now, for your sakes, sacrifice life itself, if this should be necessary, to secure your interest in the invaluable blessings of the Christian covenant. Believe me, then, when I assure you that I feel the strongest attachment to you; and suffer not the injurious calumnies of our enemies to excite in your minds any unfavourable suspicions concerning me.

5. The apostle suggests to their recollection the example of industry which he had set them, in labouring for his own subsistence while he was employed in preaching the gospel to them, ver. 9.

9. *Moreover*[1], *ye remember, brethren, our labour and toil*[2]; how, *working night and day that we might not be burthensome*[3] *to any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.*

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[1] *Moreover.*] γαρ, introducing a collateral observation.

[2] *Labour and toil.*] The apostle is here evidently speaking of the pains which he and his companions took in working for a subsistence. See Chandler.

[3] *That we might not be burthensome.*] Dr. Benson observes here, that "ministers have a right to a maintenance from the

In an opulent and commercial city like yours, the enemies of the gospel are disposed to calumniate the serious professors of the Christian religion, as men who neglect their secular concerns; and to upbraid the teachers of it as encouraging idleness, both by their doctrine and example. But you recollect, my brethren, that our conduct while we exercised our ministry among you gave no countenance to this foul aspersion. For though, while we devote our time to the instruction of others, we have a right to a decent maintenance from those

Ch. II. Ver. 9.

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people to whom they preach; and it is not their duty in all cases to labour for bread with their own hands. This appears both from reason and from scripture. St. Paul often gave up his just rights, either, 1.) That he might give no occasion to charge him with covetous and worldly views; or, 2.) That he might cut off all occasion from false apostles to claim a maintenance from his example; or, 3.) That idle and slothful Christians might not pretend from his example to vindicate their idleness." Dr. Benson adds, that it was the custom of the Jews to teach their children a trade, even though they gave them a liberal education. Acts xviii. 3.

To these observations of Dr. Benson's I would take leave to add what appears to be at least equally just: that where the persons who enjoy the benefit of a minister's instructions either cannot or will not raise a competency to support his family, it is neither criminal nor disgraceful in a minister to use any honourable means for his own support; and that it would be neither improper nor undesirable that young men who are educating for the ministry should also acquire the knowledge of some profession or occupation, by which they might maintain themselves and their families in a decent and reputable manner. Dr. Benson also remarks the propriety and decorum of the apostle's not noticing to the Thessalonians, who were probably poor, the supplies which he and his associates occasionally received from Philippi during their residence at Thessalonica; and which he very properly mentions with gratitude in his letter to the Philippians, Phil. iv. 16.

Ch. II. Ver. 9. for whose benefit we labour, yet we were far from insisting upon this right while we resided among you. And indeed you cannot but remember, that while we employed the greater part of the day in teaching both publicly and privately the important truths of divine revelation, the remainder of our time was usually spent in hard labour for our own subsistence; and that to this end we encroached even upon the hours of necessary repose; that so we might not put you to inconvenient expense in maintaining us, and that we might preclude the cavils of those who were disposed to represent us either as idle or as mercenary.

6. He reminds the Thessalonians of the piety and sanctity of the preachers of the gospel, and how earnestly it had been recommended to them to follow the example of their teachers, ver. 10—12.

10. *Ye* are *witnesses, and God*[1] is witness, *how holily, and righteously, and unblameably, we behaved*
11. *ourselves among you that believe*[2]*: as ye know how we exhorted*[3]*, and comforted, and charged every*

[1] *Ye* are *witnesses, and God.*] "A very solemn appeal this," says Dr. Chandler, "upon a very important occasion; and a noble period, full of majesty and grace."

[2] *How holily,* &c.] "*holily* towards God, *righteously* towards men, *unblameably,* i. e. without giving any just occasion of complaint in the manner of our instruction, or in the methods we made use of to bring you to the acknowledgement of the truth." Chandler.

[3] *Exhorted.*] ημεν is to be understood after παρακαλεντες. Grotius mentions it as a Hebrew idiom; but Benson and Chandler, and before them Blackwall, notice it as an ellipsis not uncommon in the best Greek authors.

one of you, as a father his children, that ye should walk in a manner worthy of God, who inviteth you into his glorious kingdom[4]. Ch. II. Ver. 12.

We are very sensible that there are many who are disposed to traduce our characters, and to represent us as impious and wicked men, who, under a pretence of a divine commission, are accomplishing their own base and sinister designs. But of

[4] *Worthy of God*, &c.] "How affectionate, how engaging, how powerful," says Dr. Chandler, "this manner of instruction! The character of a father implies tenderness and authority. As such he exhorts them, he comforts them, he charges them; μαρτυρομενοι, *beseeching* and *conjuring* them in the most solemn manner; and testifying to them the absolute necessity that they should walk worthy of God." "*Kingdom* and *glory*," says Dr. Benson, "are put by a usual hendiadys for *glorious kingdom*. The glory in God's temporal kingdom was the shechenah, that refulgent cloud which resided between the two cherubim, overshadowing the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies, Exod. xiii. 21, 22. To that the apostle seems here to allude; but the Christian church has no such external visible glory. Its glory is truth, charity, and holiness." He adds, that "Two motives are here suggested to induce the Christians at Thessalonica to live a holy life. 1.) The nature and character of the true God whose worshipers they now were. 2.) This holy God had called them into his glorious kingdom, the Christian church, from a state of ignorance, idolatry, and vice, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

"If the most unquestioned indications of an upright mind in this epistle," says Dr. Priestley, "be properly attended to, (and I will venture to say there is no instance upon record of any hypocrite writing in this manner,) and it be compared with the equally unquestionable zeal of the apostle in preaching the gospel, and the marks of a *sound mind* in conducting himself with the greatest prudence and judgement, a conviction of the truth of Christianity will be the necessary result. Let any unbeliever account for the character, the conduct, and the mode of writing of this apostle, upon any other supposition, if he can. If any person thinks that he can, I will venture to say he either has not duly attended to all the circumstances, or has little knowledge of human nature."

Ch. II. Ver. 12. such criminal views and conduct our consciences acquit us; and you, my friends, amongst whom we lately resided, and who were witnesses to our whole conduct, will give your verdict in our favour. But you could only witness our external conduct. There is a Being who searches the heart; and to him we humbly but confidently appeal for the purity of our motives, and the sanctity of our conduct. He knows the reverence of our hearts with regard to himself, the rectitude of our behaviour to our fellow-creatures, and our entire freedom from every thing deserving of censure, whether in doctrine or practice, in our intercourse with you, who received the Christian doctrine. And you remember, my dear friends and children in the gospel, what paternal vigilance and tenderness we exercised over you: exhorting some, comforting others, and earnestly pressing it upon all to regulate your conduct agreeably to your Christian profession. You have renounced idolatry, and are become worshipers of the true and living God: act always as in his presence, and make it your supreme concern to serve and please him. He has invited you, though heathen, to become subjects of that glorious kingdom which he has established in the world: a kingdom not dignified, indeed, with external splendour, but glorious in knowledge, in holiness, and in peace: you have accepted the heavenly call. Prize highly your inestimable privilege; and show by your whole conduct that you are true and approved members of this holy and honourable community.

SECTION III.

THE APOSTLE expresses his gratitude to God for the fortitude and zeal of the Thessalonian converts, in a season of severe persecution; and denounces the approaching judgements of God upon the Jewish nation. Ch. ii. 13—16. Ch. II.

1. The apostle gives thanks to God for the success of the gospel at Thessalonica, and the good effect it produced upon those who were converted to the faith, ver. 13.

For this cause also we give thanks to God continually[1], *that when ye received the doctrine concerning God which ye heard from us*[2], *ye accepted* Ver. 13.

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[1] *For this cause,* &c.] See ch. i. 2. The apostle having stated his own views and conduct, and those of his associates, when they first introduced the gospel at Thessalonica, now enlarges upon the effect which it had produced upon the Thessalonians, and shows that their mission had not been in vain. Ch. ii. 1. See Benson.

[2] *Doctrine of God,* &c.] λογον ακοης παρ' ἡμων τȣ Θεȣ, *the word of the report of,* or *concerning God.* Comp. Heb. iv. 2, Matt. xiv. 1; the doctrine which they heard concerning God from the apostles. This Dr. Chandler thinks to be the true critical meaning of the place. The word *received* occurs a second time improperly in the common version; the words in the original being different. "The first word, παραλαβοντες, signifies 'taking any thing proposed into consideration, so as to pass a proper judgement upon it.' The second, εδεξασθε, signifies 'to approve and embrace in consequence of serious examination.'" See Chandler and Benson.

Ch. II. Ver. 13. *not a doctrine of men, but a doctrine of God*[1], *as in truth it is; which also powerfully operateth in you who believe.*

And now, my brethren, having reminded you of the circumstances in which we first preached the gospel at Thessalonica, and of the temper and spirit which we manifested among you, I rejoice in the recollection of your own conduct upon the same interesting occasion. To many, indeed, our arguments were unavailing, and upon their minds the miraculous powers which we exercised made no valuable impression: but we bless God that this neglect of the gospel was not universal. We can never forget the candour and seriousness with which you listened to our instructions, as messengers of God; and in our daily devotions we never omit to offer up our thanksgivings to God, for your firm conviction of the truth, and for your public fearless profession of the doctrine which you heard. And we also bless God that you had good reason for your conduct. The doctrine you embraced is not the invention of man; it is, and will most assuredly appear to be, the truth of God, and a truth of the greatest practical importance. You are yourselves, my friends, the living proofs of it: no other doc-

[1] *Not a doctrine,* &c.] Dr. Chandler thinks that the particle *as* in the common version is twice inserted without any reason; the sense being much better without it. "The apostle," he observes, "had double reason of thankfulness to God: that the doctrine he preached concerning God was really from him; and that he had been instrumental to persuade the Thessalonians to embrace it."

trine could have inspired that fortitude and zeal, and cheerful hope, which you have experienced and manifested in the trying circumstances in which you have been placed. Ch. II. Ver. 13.

2. The apostle traces a resemblance between the circumstances of the Thessalonians and those of the Jewish converts in Judea; and after describing the character of the unbelieving Jews, he concludes with a solemn denunciation of the approaching judgements of God upon that perverse and incorrigible people, ver. 14—16.

For ye, brethren, are become like[2] *the churches of God in Judea which are in Christ Jesus*[3]*: inasmuch as ye also have suffered from your own countrymen*[4] *the same things which they* have *from the Jews.* 14.

That the gospel of Christ has been cordially embraced by you, and has produced its genuine effect upon you, is evident from the firmness and forti-

[2] *Are become like.*] μιμηται. So Wakefield. Gr. *imitators.* "*Cœtus Christianorum Judaici sc. Palæstinenses, Judæorum odia magis experti sunt, quam ecclesiæ regionum ceterarum Asiaticarum, et Europæarum; nam Judæi præcipue erant ii, qui Christianos persequebantur.*" Rosenmuller. "as you yourselves are a plain instance." Pyle.

[3] *Which are in Christ Jesus.*] which believe in Christ, which profess the Christian religion: "a defective form of expression which must be supplied in some such way. They worship one God and believe in Christ Jesus." Chandler.

[4] *Your own countrymen.*] The heathen idolaters considering the Christians at first only as a sect of Jews, did not give themselves any trouble about them till they were instigated by the Jews. This was particularly the case at Thessalonica and Berea, &c. Acts xvii. 5, 13.

Ch. II. Ver. 14. tude which you have discovered under the persecutions which you have endured. For your situation at Thessalonica bears a very near resemblance to that of the Christian converts in Judea. Your fellow-citizens, though heathen, and as such in general indifferent to the rise and progress of new opinions and sects, have been instigated by the Jews to persecute you with as much rancour as the Jews in Judea persecute the believers there. And indeed I am constrained to bear a sad and reluctant testimony to the wickedness and the ruin of my unhappy countrymen.

15. *Who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets*[1], *and have persecuted us, and who please not*
16. *God*[2], *and are against all men*[3], *not suffering us*[4]

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[1] *The prophets.*] The word ιδιες, *their own*, is omitted in the manuscripts of best authority, and in the Vulgate and other ancient versions. It was probably a marginal gloss. See Griesbach.

[2] *Please not God.*] A *meiosis*, by which much more is understood than the words express. The apostle means that the conduct of the Jews was in the highest degree displeasing to God. See Chandler and Benson.

[3] *Are against all men.*] " εναντιοι denotes *enemies*; in a state of hostile opposition." Chandler. This was the character which the Jews bore among the heathen, whom it is well known that they regarded with hatred and contempt.

Non monstrare vias, eadem nisi sacra colenti;
Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.

JUVENAL. *Sat.* xiv.

Adversus alios omnes hostile odium. Tacitus. See Elsner.— " against Gentiles, whether converted or unconverted; and against converted Jews." Newcome. This severe description of the Jews is confirmed by Josephus, who frequently calls them θεος-υγεις, *haters of God*; and who, in a passage which has often been cited from his *Jewish War*, b. vi. c. 13. § 6. declares that " he thinks that if the Romans had delayed to take

to declare salvation to the Gentiles: thus continually filling up the measure of their sins [5]. *But wrath is overtaking them* [6] *to utter destruction* [7]. Ch. II. Ver. 16.

With regret I say it; but truth compels me to declare, that the crimes of my deluded countrymen have now nearly reached their utmost limit, and that their ruin is impending and inevitable. For they have been the murderers of Jesus, our lord and

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vengeance on these wretches, they would either have been swallowed up by an earthquake, or that the city would have been swept away by a deluge; or that they would have partaken of the thunders of Sodom; for that they were a more impious generation than those who suffered these calamities." See Chandler.

[4] *Not suffering us.*] κωλυοντων. So Wakefield. *forbidding, hindering.* "The meaning is, "not forbidding us to preach in order to their salvation, but to preach the doctrine of the possibility of their salvation by faith alone." Chandler.

[5] *Filling up,* &c.] "This," says Dr. Benson, "is an allusion to filling up a vessel to the brim. The vessel was filled a great way before, but this filled it up quite. A similar allusion is used Gen. xv. 16, Matt. xxiii. 32."

[6] *Is overtaking them.*] εφθασε· "literally, *hath overtaken,* on account of its nearness and certainty." Wakefield. "That desolation was drawing nigh when the apostle wrote this epistle; and the destruction of their temple, city, and nation, happened within twenty years after." Benson.

[7] *To utter destruction.*] εις τελος. "finally, at last." H. Stephens, Grotius, Knatchbull, Benson. "to consummation, to utter destruction." Newcome, and others. So LXX. Numb. xvii. 13; Josh. vii. 24, x. 20; Job vi. 9; Amos ix. 8; 2 Chron. xii. 12. "wrath is coming on them to the full. Such wrath as shall perfect and consummate their destruction." Chandler. This epistle was written A.D. 52. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple happened about twenty years afterwards. This event the apostle foreknew either by inspiration, or by the recorded prophecy of Jesus previous to his crucifixion. Mr. Wakefield translates the words, "complete punishment is overtaking them."

Ch. II. Ver. 16. master, whom they ought to have received as their promised Messiah, and who gave the most ample proof of his divine legation: yet even him they delivered up to the Roman power, under a false charge of treason and blasphemy, and insisted upon his public crucifixion. The prophets who foretold the mission of Christ, had been treated by their predecessors with similar cruelty. And if we, the apostles and messengers of Jesus, and the authorized witnesses of his resurrection, have hitherto escaped, it has been owing to want of power, not of inclination on their part: for they have beaten and imprisoned us, and forbidden us to teach the doctrine of Christ; and some of our number have even been put to death. Thus they are acting in a manner most highly offensive to the Supreme Being, whom they profess to venerate, while they oppose his will and destroy his holy and authorized messengers. They are the enemies of the human race; holding all mankind in contempt and abhorrence, though equally with themselves the creatures and children of God. And this malignity of spirit they evince in a way which renders it doubly odious, by giving every obstruction in their power to the promulgation of the gospel among the Gentiles, and refusing them admission into the kingdom and family of God. Thus they add crime to crime, without any interruption or remission, till, the measure of their iniquities being full, divine justice will no longer forbear to strike. And dreadful indeed will their approaching catastrophe be. The denunciations

of the crucified prophet will be literally fulfilled. The ruin of the nation will be complete. And the awful consummation is at hand. CH. II.

SECTION IV.

THE APOSTLE, having been disappointed in his intention of making the Thessalonians a visit, and having sent Timothy to Thessalonica to learn the state of their affairs, expresses the highest satisfaction in the report which that evangelist had made concerning their perseverance in the faith, and their affection to him: and he concludes with testifying his earnest desire to visit them, and his best wishes for their establishment in faith and holiness. Ch. ii. 17 —iii. 13.

1. Having been compelled to leave them abruptly, he was earnestly desirous of seeing them again, but had hitherto been prevented from executing his purpose, ver. 17, 18.

Now we, brethren[1], *having been bereaved of you*[2] *at an hour's warning*[3], *in person, not in* Ver. 17.

[1] *Now we, brethren.*] Dr. Benson observes that "the apostle has called his converts at Thessalonica, *brethren, beloved,* or *beloved brethren,* no less than seventeen times in this epistle: whereby he not only testified his very ardent affection for them, but acknowledged the Gentile as well as Jewish converts for Christian brethren."

[2] *Bereaved of you.*] απορφανισθεντες. See Wakefield. "Ορ-

Ch. II. Ver. 18. *heart, have earnestly endeavoured with great desire*[1] *to see your face. Accordingly, we intended to come to you, even I Paul, more than once, but Satan hindered us*[2].

My dear brethren, you recollect how suddenly, and with how little previous notice, I was torn from you as a father from the children of his affection, in consequence of the tumult which was raised at the instigation of the Jews. But though I was personally compelled to withdraw from you, my heart still remained with you, and my tenderest affections are fixed upon you: so that ever since I left you I have never ceased to devise the means of gratifying my ardent desire to visit you again. Hitherto, however, my efforts have been fruitless: for though I Paul, your teacher and apostle, have re-

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φανος, ὁ γονεων εσπρημενος, και τεκνων." Hesychius. "He compares the uneasiness he was under," says Dr. Chandler, "to the distress of a father robbed of, and torn from, his children, at an hour's warning, and forced to leave them in circumstances of the most helpless danger."

[2] *At an hour's warning.*] προς καιρον ὡρας. So Dr. Chandler, and unquestionably right; though this sense is overlooked, as he observes, by almost all interpreters. Mr. Wakefield's version is, "at a moment's warning." It is not true that the apostle was separated from them for a short time only, for it was six years before he saw them again; and if it had been fact, it would have been beside the apostle's purpose to have mentioned it.

[1] *Earnestly endeavoured,* &c.] The apostle expresses with great emphasis his earnest desire to see the Thessalonians again. "The word," says Dr. Chandler, "signifies, 'I diligently endeavoured.' To raise the idea, he adds, 'I more abundantly endeavoured;' and to make his diligence appear as strong as words could do it, concludes, 'I more abundantly endeavoured to see you with great desire.'" "*Amat Paulus, vocabula per se augentia, amplius augere.*" Grotius.

peatedly intended and endeavoured to take a journey to Thessalonica, some impediment or other has always occurred to prevent me; and particularly the malignity of the Jews, and the peculiar enmity which they harbour against me, and which would lead them to sacrifice my life, if they could once get me into their power. Ch. II. Ver. 18.

2. The apostle states the delight he felt in the prospect of meeting his Thessalonian converts at the coming of Christ, ver. 19, 20.

For what is *our hope*[3] *or joy, or crown of triumph*[4], *in the presence of our Lord Jesus*[5] *at his* 19.

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[2] *Satan hindered us.*] "wicked men, the instruments of Satan." Newcome. The word Satan signifies *adversary*, and in the Old Testament is constantly used in this sense. In the New Testament it occurs thirty-three times; and commonly expresses, the principle of opposition personified, whatever be the cause or the object of the obstruction. Paul's paralytic disorder is called Satan, 2 Cor. xii. 7, because it obstructed his preaching the gospel. Peter is called *Satan*, Matt. xii. 26, because he contradicted what Jesus had just declared. *Satan* sometimes signifies the heathen power, and sometimes the persecuting power; but it never signifies what it is usually understood to express, the chief of apostates and fallen angels.—Dr. Priestley explains it, "one adversary or other has prevented me." "*Impedivit autem hoc Satanas, injectâ ei necessitate disputandi sæpius cum Stoicis et Epicureis qui Athenis erant.*" Grotius. "The enemy here intended," says Dr. Benson, "was evidently the unbelieving Jews at Thessalonica." It was some unknown impediment.

[3] *For what* is *our hope.*] Dr. Chandler observes that it is "uncertain whether the apostle here refers to the crown of triumph worn by the conqueror, or to the garland of victory in the games." Dr. Benson remarks, that "as Paul expected to know his own converts in the great day, we may therefore hope to know our friends in a future state."

[4] *Or crown of triumph.*] καυχησεως. So Wakefield. "a

Ch. II. Ver. 20. *coming? Are not even ye*[1]*? Ye are indeed our glory and our joy*[2].

If it should be in my power, I will make another effort to visit you soon; but I may perhaps be again disappointed; and possibly in this world I may never have another opportunity of seeing you again. But there is a day advancing when we shall be sure to meet: it is the day of our Lord and Master Jesus, when he shall return to raise the dead and to judge the world. And to what think ye that I look forward with delightful anticipation, as the brightest crown, the most transporting bliss of that triumphant day?—It is to the happiness of meeting you, my beloved brethren, my dear Thessalonian converts, my joy and pride, at the tribunal of our honoured Lord and judge—approved, acknowledged, and rewarded by him. Yes; it is to meet, never to part any more. This will be happiness indeed. And of this triumph, blessed be God, it is not in

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crown of which a man boasts." Le Clerc. "*Vocatur corona, non quotidiana, sed quæ diebus summæ lætitiæ ad eximium ornatum sumitur. Sic Paulum ornabant tam præclaræ per Macedoniam structæ ab ipso ecclesiæ.*" Grotius.

[3] *In the presence of our Lord Jesus.*] The received text adds *Christ*; but this word is wanting in the Alexandrine, Clermont, and Corbey manuscripts, and in the Syriac, Vulgate, and other versions. See Griesbach; who however retains it in his text.

[1] *Are not even ye?*] "*Construi hæc sic debent.*" Grotius. See also Chandler and Benson.

[2] *Ye are indeed,* &c.] So Mr. Wakefield. The old English version is, *Yes, ye are indeed our glory and joy.* "The particle γαρ, which we render *for,* should have been translated *even.* For this use of the particle, see Herodotus *Hist.* I. i. 8, V. iii. 12." Chandler.

the power of our worst and most inveterate enemies either to hinder or to deprive us. Ch. II. Ver. 20.

3. The apostle, moved by the tender anxiety which he felt on their account, had sent Timothy from Athens, to visit, to console, and to encourage them, ch. iii. 1—3.

So then, being no longer able to refrain[3], *we willingly acquiesced*[4] *in being left at Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother, and a fellow worker with God in the gospel of Christ*[5], *to support and encourage you*[6] *concerning your fidelity*[7]; *that none of you*[8] *may be moved*[9] *by these* our *afflic-* Ch. III. Ver. 1. 2. 3.

[3] *Refrain.*] "στεγω properly signifies *to cover:* here it signifies, to suppress the impatience of our desires." Chandler. "being able to endure no longer." Wakefield.

[4] *Willingly acquiesced.*] See Chandler. "we have submitted." Wakefield. "I cheerfully preferred." Benson. The word ευδοκησαμεν expresses the readiness with which the apostle acquiesced in being left by himself at Athens.

[5] *Timothy,* &c.] The copies read these clauses variously: I adopt the reading of Griesbach.

[6] *Support and encourage.*] So Wakefield. Παρακαλεσαι signifies both to *exhort* and *comfort:* the apostle might intend to include both significations.

[7] *Your fidelity.*] See ver. 5: not concerning their faith, but their firm adherence to their profession.

[8] *That none of you.*] τω μηδενα. The best copies read το μηδενα for εις το κ. τ. λ. Griesbach: see ver. 13. Benson and Newcome.

[9] *Be moved.*] "σαινεσθαι, *proprie adulor, blandior, pellicio, non solum de canibus caudam blande moventibus,* σαινει, κολακευει. Hesychius. *Hinc, quatio, concutio, et metaphorice, commoveo, turbo.*" Schleusner. The word is commonly understood as a metaphor, taken from a dog's moving his tail, either from joy or fear; but more frequently in the former sense. And Dr. Chandler supposes that "the apostle meant that Timothy was to caution the Thessalonians against being fawned and flattered

Ch. III. Ver. 3. *tions, for ye yourselves know that we are appointed to this* [1].

So solicitous was I, my brethren, on your account, so apprehensive lest something amiss might have happened in consequence of our abrupt departure from Thessalonica, of the persecutions which we endured, and of the perils to which you were yourselves exposed, that I could no longer refrain from taking some steps to relieve my own anxiety, and to fortify your principles. And as it was not

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out of their faith and hope, by views of security and other worldly advantages." The common, and perhaps the more probable, interpretation is, that they should not be deterred from their profession by the persecution of the teachers of the gospel.

[1] *Appointed to this.*] "This is the natural lot of us apostles." Acts ix. 16. Newcome.—"In those early ages," says Dr. Priestley, "men were not tempted by any honours or emoluments of this life. They were apprized that they were not to expect any advantage from the scheme in this world, but that all their hopes of reward were to be in another. Now what could induce men in the cool possession of themselves, as the apostles evidently were, and thousands of others, naturally lovers of life and of the pleasures and advantages of it, as well as other men, to entertain these great and distant prospects, and to sacrifice every thing else to them, but the most well-grounded faith in the gospel, or such evidence as could not but command the assent of men in their circumstances, who had every possible opportunity of judging; and which therefore ought to satisfy us?" "This word," says Dr. Chandler, "is very justly translated. I see no reason to soften the meaning of it so as to exclude the positive order and appointment of God. The word is used both in sacred and profane writers to denote something fixed and determined. Luke ii. 34, Philip. i. 17. Nor is there any thing unworthy of God in such an appointment. He called them out to be public examples of faith, patience, and constancy. He appointed them to the honour of being martyrs and confessors for the truth, that hereby he might spread the Christian doctrine, approve their fidelity, and render them worthy the crown of victory."

in my power to visit you, I very cheerfully proposed to remain at Athens by myself, in a situation of considerable difficulty, and amongst persons who were perfect strangers, many of whom were insolent and prating sceptics, and dispatched Timothy, my faithful and beloved associate in the ministry of the gospel, and indeed I may add, a fellow-worker with God himself in the same glorious cause, to Thessalonica, to confirm your faith, and to administer those advices and consolations which would be most effectual to encourage you to persevere in your Christian profession. And I particularly charged him to caution you against being warped from your integrity by the consideration of those sufferings to which the most eminent of the preachers of the Christian doctrine are exposed; for you cannot but recollect what you so often heard me declare, that ease and interest were not the objects we had in view in the exercise of our ministry; that suffering was as familiar to us as teaching, and was, in fact, a part of our ministerial and apostolic office. It was the divine appointment, and we knew from the beginning what we had to expect. Ch. III. Ver. 3.

4. The apostle, though he had distinctly forewarned them of what was to happen, yet being anxious for their stedfastness, had sent to inquire after their state, ver. 4, 5.

For, indeed, when we were with you, we told you beforehand, that we should suffer trouble, even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, 4. 5.

Ch. III. Ver. 5. *being no longer able to endure, I sent to know your fidelity*[1], fearing, *lest by some means the seducer*[2] *might have seduced you, and our labour might be in vain.*

I did not flatter you, my brethren, when you first embraced the Christian religion, that either you or your teachers would lead an easy and quiet life in the open profession of this novel and obnoxious doctrine. While I was yet with you, before the storm burst, previously to any offence which was taken at us or at our doctrine, and while we were even held in admiration in consequence of the display of our miraculous powers, I told you that this tranquillity would be of short duration, and that sorrow and suffering would speedily overtake us; and so it proved, as you well recollect. These sufferings, therefore, which we so distinctly foretold, can constitute no reasonable objection against the authority of our mission. Knowing, however, the advantage which the artful enemies of the gospel would make of the persecutions of its ministers, I was eager to send my beloved colleague to inquire into your state, fearing lest the terrors of persecution should have alarmed you, or the artifices of

[1] *Your fidelity.*] "By profane authors," says Dr. Chandler, "this word πιστις is frequently used to signify the 'fidelity of subjects to a prince,' and of 'one man to another in the performance of promises;' and should have been rendered *fidelity* or *constancy*." See ver. 7, where Mr. Wakefield renders it *perseverance*. Compare ver. 8.

[2] *Seducer.*] πειραζων· "one that solicits and persuades another to a criminal action, by whatsoever methods it may be. This is the sense of it also in profane authors." Chandler.

the enemy have seduced you from your allegiance to the gospel, and should have made void our labours and our hopes. Ch. III. Ver. 5.

5. The apostle expresses the utmost satisfaction in the report which Timothy had made of their adherence to Christianity, and of their affection to him, ver. 6—8.

But Timothy, being lately returned[3] *from you to us, and having brought us good tidings of your fidelity and affection, and of the kind remembrance which you constantly have of us, being as earnestly desirous to see us, as we* are to see *you*[4]; *for this cause, brethren, we were comforted concerning you, in all our affliction and poverty*[5], *by your fidelity. For now we live* indeed[6], *seeing that ye stand firmly in the Lord.* 6. 7. 8.

[3] *Timothy being lately returned.*] "Timothy having come back to us just now from you." Wakefield. The expression seems to indicate that the epistle was written soon after Timothy's return; who, together with Silas, came to the apostle at Corinth, from which city, therefore, this epistle was dated. See Acts xviii. 5.

[4] *As earnestly desirous to see us,* &c.] "These words are part of Timothy's report, who assured the apostle that their affectionate remembrance of him was such, that they had as warm and passionate a fondness for seeing him, as he could have for seeing them." Chandler.

[5] *Affliction and poverty.*] αναγκη "this word signifies a *necessity* and *pressure* of any kind but particularly the distress of *poverty*, which seems to be the meaning of the word in this place." Chandler. The apostle was now at Corinth, where he refused to accept supplies from the new converts, and chose to maintain himself by his own manual industry. Acts xviii. 1—4; 2 Cor. xi. 9, 10, xii. 13—18. He was assisted by contributions from Macedonia, 2 Cor. xi. 9, and probably found it difficult to procure subsistence.

Ch. III. Ver. 8.

And now, my brethren, with unspeakable satisfaction I acknowledge that my solicitude is relieved, and that my fears concerning you have been happily dispelled by the return of Timothy, and the pleasing intelligence which he has brought. Having left Athens, and being now at Corinth, Silas and Timothy have lately joined me here. And though, as you perceive, I am destined to wander from place to place, and am but poorly provided with the necessaries of life, having determined to accept of nothing from these opulent Corinthians; yet, amidst poverty and distress, I am soothed and cheered with the favourable report which my faithful associate has made of your firm adherence to your Christian profession, of your love to each other, and of your affectionate attachment to me, your instructor and friend. For Timothy has informed me that you long as earnestly to see me, as I do to see you. Whatever, therefore, may be the disadvantages of my external condition, I am far from meaning to complain. No, my brethren, since this evangelist is come back with the joyful tidings of your firm adherence to the doctrine of Christ, I feel myself a

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[6] *We live* indeed, &c.] εαν does not always imply that the case is dubious. See 1 John iii. 2. "How does this generous and benevolent apostle," says Dr. Benson, "treat his converts like his children, and with the bowels of a father overlook all his own persecutions and distresses as long as things went well with them! If they had not persevered, it would have greatly troubled and afflicted him. But it was joy, it was transport, it was life worth enjoying, to hear of their perseverance and stedfastness in the Christian faith. Here is a pattern for all the pastors of the Christian church."

happy man: to be assured of your continual progress in faith and holiness, this is life indeed; life worth enjoying: it is health, wealth, and happiness. Ch. III. Ver. 8.

6. The apostle expresses his devout gratitude to God for the satisfaction which he felt on their account, and his earnest prayers that he may be permitted to visit them soon, ver. 9—11.

For what thanks are we able[1] *to render to God concerning you, in return for all the joy with which we rejoice on your account before our God? Night and day*[2] *praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and make up what is wanting to* insure *your fidelity*[3]. *But may our God and Father him-* 9. 10. 11.

[1] *For what thanks are we able to render in return.*] ανταποδουναι. "the word signifies, 'to give something in return as an acknowledgement for favours received.' The interrogation increases the vehemence and warmth of the sentiment. His gratitude was stronger than he was able to express." See Chandler, whose translation I have followed.

[2] *Night and day.*] "An allusion to the computation of the Jews, who began their day at sunset." Benson.

[3] *Wanting to* insure *your fidelity:*] "*i. e.* to impart some spiritual gift. Rom. i. 11. Grotius." Newcome. "It is an imagination of some interpreters, (says Dr. Chandler, alluding to Dr. Benson and others,) that when the apostles first planted a church, they taught them only the plain and fundamental articles of Christianity, and the necessity of repentance and new obedience; and when the converts had digested these, then they instructed them in the more minute doctrines of Christianity. But I think this is a mistaken observation; nor do I well comprehend which of the real articles of Christianity are properly minute; I would hope no articles of the Christian doctrine deserve this character. The true meaning of the Greek expression is 'those things which are yet wanting *towards your fidelity*;' their constancy in the faith had not yet attained its

Ch. III. Ver. 11. *self*[1], *and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way*[2] *unto you.*

So delighted am I with the intelligence I have received concerning you, that I am at a loss for words to express my gratitude to the Father of mercies for the joy and transport which I feel on your account, when, in the hour of retired devotion, I bear you upon my heart before God. And indeed it is the constant theme of my earnest solicitation,

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full establishment and support; not that they had received but an imperfect knowledge of Christianity from the apostle, but that there was yet something wanting to confirm them in the faith they had embraced, which even Timothy could not supply. What these things were, Grotius hath with great judgement pointed out, Rom. i. 11, that he might impart some spiritual gift either upon greater numbers, or in larger abundance."

Dr. C. supposes another alternative: that the apostle alludes to moral precepts, in which he had imperfectly instructed them. But surely this supposition is to the full as objectionable as Dr. Benson's *minute doctrines.*

[1] *Our God and Father.*] "Here, as upon all occasions," says Dr. Priestley, "the title of God is appropriated to the Father, and Christ is not entitled to that appellation, but is quite distinct from God, as much as any other man can be."

[2] *And our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way.*] Dr. Benson, Dr. Chandler, and other expositors understand this text as a prayer to Christ, and as authorizing what they call *mediatorial worship* of him. Dr. C. adds, that "*Lord* in the next verse unquestionably signifies *Christ*, and that the prayer is with great propriety addressed to him." But Dr. Priestley, with much greater propriety, observes, that "though God and Christ are here joined together, it is by no means a proper example of prayer to Christ; but as all power is given to Christ, with respect to his church, and he frequently appeared to Paul, and directed the course of his apostolical journeys, it was natural for him to desire to have the same direction to go where he wished himself." *To direct us*, &c. The word signifies *to make straight:* i. e. to remove impediments and obstructions. The apostle visited Macedonia twice after this, but not till six years after this epistle was written. See Benson.

morning and evening, to be permitted to visit you again, and to administer those instructions and encouragements, and those additional supplies of the holy spirit which may be requisite to your perfection in faith and holiness, and to your resolute perseverance in your Christian profession. And may that God who, in the gospel covenant, vouchsafes to acknowledge himself as common Father to Jew and Gentile; and may Jesus Christ, our gracious Master, who superintends my mission, and directs my course, be pleased to remove every impediment which obstructs our mutual wishes, and speedily to open a free passage for me to visit you again. Ch. III. Ver. 11.

7. The apostle further prays that the Thessalonians may improve in mutual affection and general benevolence, and that they may persevere in the practice of duty till the coming of Christ, ver. 12, 13.

And may the Lord[3] *cause you to increase and* 12.

[3] *May the Lord cause you to increase.*] ὁ Κυριος. This word is wanting in the Syriac: the Alexandrine copy reads ὁ Θεος, *God*; and the Clermont, with three other uncial manuscripts, reads ὁ κυριος Ιησους, *the Lord Jesus*. With these conflicting authorities, it cannot be ascertained which is the true reading; nor whether the word *Lord* signifies Christ, or God his Father. I incline to the former sense, and think the prayer is addressed to Christ; who during the apostolic age maintained a personal intercourse with the church, which since that period has been withdrawn: which intercourse laid a foundation for personal applications to him, especially on the part of the apostle Paul, all whose motions were directed by him, which applications in other individuals, and in succeeding times, would be unautho-

Ch. III. *abound in love*[1] *toward each other, and toward all*
Ver. 13. men, *even as we* do *toward you*[2]*: so as to esta-*

rized and idolatrous. The apostle prays that the Lord would *cause them to increase and abound in love*; perhaps not by any immediate operation upon the heart, but by supplying them with means and opportunities of improvement in the doctrine and spirit of the gospel. Archbishop Newcome cautiously observes upon ver. 13, that "we have here a repetition of the antecedent, if we suppose Κυριος in ver. 12 to be genuine, and rightly understood of the Lord Jesus."

"In these two verses," says Dr. Benson, "the apostle first prays to God the Father, and then unto our Lord Jesus Christ." And he introduces a note discussing the question of prayer to Christ, in which he comes to this conclusion: "That supreme and ultimate worship is due to God, and to him alone: mediatorial worship is due to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to him alone." He adds, "If we follow the scripture model, we shall very seldom address our Lord Jesus Christ directly; and when we do, we should always remember to address him as mediator." Of which mode of address, however, the learned expositor has supplied us with no example from the New Testament. Dr. Chandler expresses himself with even more confidence upon the subject than Dr. Benson. Upon ver. 11 he observes, that "the prayer is directed with great propriety and dignity to God our Father, who is styled God peculiarly and emphatically, and who is the original, eternal, supreme, and indefectible source of all good; and to our Lord Jesus Christ, the mediatorial secondary source, the Father's eternal repository of good, in and by whom he enriches the whole rational creation, and especially his church on earth, with all necessary blessings." And he observes on the words ver. 12, *May the Lord cause you to increase*, "The Lord here unquestionably signifies Christ; and the prayer is with great propriety addressed to him because he had so loved them as to give himself as a propitiation for their sins." And he introduces a long paragraph at the end of his paraphrase upon this chapter, in which he vindicates at large the propriety and expedience of the mediatorial worship of Christ.

Thus it appears that these two learned and pious Arians regarded it as a duty to pray to Christ; and, together with Clarke, Emlyn, and other eminent Arian divines of the age in which they lived, they saw nothing in what they called *mediatorial* and *secondary worship*, inconsistent with the doctrine of the unity and sole supremacy of God the Father: whose crea-

blish your hearts unblameable in holiness in the presence of our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints[3]. Ch. III. Ver. 13.

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ture Jesus is, and his delegate, as they believed, in the formation, support, and government of the universe. And in this conclusion they were completely justified, if their premises were true: for what impropriety can there be in addressing a friend who is known to be present and within hearing, whether he is seen or unseen? and who can be a proper object of worship, if the Lord our Maker is not? The practice of worshiping Christ prevailed very generally among the Arians of the last century; and had they lived in the present day, they would have thought it very hard to be denied the name of Unitarians, as the small remnant of their successors, who worship Jesus, now do. Nor can I see any reason for extending that epithet to all Arians of all descriptions, even to those who, like Dr. Clarke, actually exclude the agency of the Deity from his works, and who represent him as merely the silent spectator of the operations of the Logos, with the exception only of those who, very consistently surely with their own views of the case, address prayer to this omnipotent, omnipresent Logos, their Maker, Supporter, and Lord. This arbitrary limitation was never thought of till the time of Dr. Price, who first introduced it, and defined an Unitarian to be one who does not worship Christ: a definition which excludes Chandler, Benson, Emlyn, Peirce, and almost all the learned and pious Arian divines who were Dr. Price's predecessors, and at least his equals in theological learning. Yet, since the time of Dr. Price this modern definition has become a great favourite with many. Names do not alter the nature of things, and are of no use any further than they convey distinct ideas. Dr. Lardner, for the sake of perspicuity, limited his use of the word Unitarian to those who believe the proper humanity of Jesus Christ; or rather to those who do not ascribe to a created being either the *attributes*, the *works*, or the *worship* which is appropriate to the Great Supreme. In this definition he is followed by Mr. Lindsey, Dr. Priestley, and many others. And the consequence of using the word constantly in this sense is, that none of their readers can mistake their meaning. Others, however, choose to use the word in a laxer sense, including all Arians under the name of Unitarians excepting those who pray to Christ. And after defining their terms, they have no doubt a right, as all writers have, to use them in the sense so defined. But this change of signification

Ch. III. Ver. 13. In the mean time, my dear Christian brethren, my earnest and affectionate prayers are daily offered

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has been attended with the inconvenience which might naturally be expected; it has introduced a lamentable degree of obscurity and confusion into many publications in other respects excellent. But let this pass. What is most extraordinary in the case is, that many who adopt Dr. Price's definition, and whose zeal is more conspicuous than their logic, value themselves highly upon it as if it were some great discovery in theology, and are by no means backward in challenging for themselves a superior degree of candour and liberality; while, with a warmth of indignation not justified by the occasion, they animadvert upon those of their brethren, who prefer Dr. Lardner's old and strict definition of Unitarianism to Dr. Price's new and lax one. Just as if there were a moral merit in a verbal difference; or, as if a writer were not at liberty, out of two definitions of the same term, to adhere to that which to his judgement appears the most correct.

The truth is, that Arianism, whether high or low, and by whatever name it is called, is in every shape erroneous and unscriptural. Carried to the extreme of Dr. Clarke, who maintains that the Logos is the Creator, Preserver, and Sustainer of the universal system, it sets up another God in the place of the Supreme, and excludes the Deity from his works; it deposes God from his throne. And so far as Arianism ascribes to a creature the attributes and works of God, it is erroneous and pernicious, it leads to polytheism and idolatry. It has no foundation in reason or in revelation, it tends to distract the mind, and to alienate the heart from God, who is the only Creator and Lord of all, and the only proper object of worship. With sentiments most friendly to the *persons* of those who are involved in this ancient error, it is the indispensable duty of every one who is enlightened in the truth as it is in Jesus, to enter his protest against their *doctrine*, and to detect and expose its fallacy and pernicious tendency to the utmost of his power. Truth can enter into no compromise with error. What fellowship hath light with darkness?

[1] *Abound in love.*] "The first affection due from them was to one another as brethren and friends; but Christianity teaches, and the love of God and Christ inspires, a more diffusive charity, love to human nature, as such: yea, to our very enemies." Chandler.

[2] *Even as we.*] "How did the apostle love them? He loved

up to God for your stability and improvement; that your conduct may be in every view worthy of your Christian profession. May God grant, and by the powerful operation of the genuine principles of the gospel may he bring it to pass, that your love to each other as fellow-Christians, exposed to the same difficulties, and heirs of the same immortal hopes, may increase and abound exceedingly. Also, that you may feel a warm benevolence to your fellow-creatures, to all who are partakers of the same nature, and capable of the same improvements in knowledge and virtue. And as our love and compassion to you was manifested in our exertions for

Ch. III. Ver. 13.

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them as a father his children: so as to be solicitous and intent upon promoting their salvation; so as to be content to be persecuted, and to live in perpetual straits to do them good; yea, so as to give up his life, if that were necessary, to secure their constancy and happiness. Generous apostle! How like the master he served! It is thus, Christians, you should love one another." Chandler.

[3] *Saints.*] ἁγιων. Some copies of little account read αγγελων, *angels.* See Grotius and Griesbach. Dr. Chandler says, "the word signifies both." It is of no practical consequence. Christ being represented under the character of a sovereign and a judge: in consistency with this symbol celestial beings are represented as his attendants and officers, to add to the dignity and pomp of his appearance. How far such descriptions are to be understood in a literal sense the awful event only will explain. And this will probably be widely different from our present imperfect and confused conceptions of it.

Dr. Benson concludes his notes upon this passage with the following reflections: "1. The apostles often put their converts in mind of Christ's coming to judgement, to excite them to the practice of universal righteousness, to prepare for that important and decisive day. 2. Our religious virtue must hold out to the end of life, if we would be prepared for the coming of Christ. 3. Our Christian course ends when we die, and terminates in the coming of Christ."

Ch. III. Ver. 13. your conversion, be you equally solicitous for the conversion of others.—This cordial, tender, universal benevolence, discovering itself in generous and habitual exertions to promote the happiness of all around you, is in fact the best means of fulfilling the duties which the gospel enjoins. In the practice of universal virtue may your hearts be firmly established, and amidst difficulties and temptations may you faithfully and honourably persevere, till that day, the arrival of which may be more speedy than we are aware, when our Lord and Master shall appear again, accompanied by all his faithful followers redeemed from the grave; whom he will present before his Father and our Father, his God and our God, as those who shall be entitled to the promises and the rewards of the gospel. In that chosen company, and upon that awful occasion, may it be your honour and happiness to appear as his approved disciples, and to participate in his glorious triumph.

SECTION V.

THE APOSTLE earnestly exhorts the Thessalonians to the practice of universal virtue, and particularly to chastity, benevolence, prudence, and industry. Ch. iv. 1—12.

1. The apostle strictly enjoins by the authority of Christ, that in the whole of their conduct it should

be their chief and growing concern to please God, Ch. IV.
ver. 1, 2.

Finally, therefore, brethren, we intreat and we Ver. 1.
exhort you[1], *in* the *Lord Jesus*[2], *according as ye have received from us how ye ought to walk and to please God, and as* indeed *ye do walk*[3], *that ye would excel*[4] *still more. For ye know what charges* 2.
we gave you by the authority of *the Lord Jesus*[5].

In the sequel of this epistle I shall take the liberty of giving you some plain hints of advice respecting your conduct as professors of the Christian religion; which from the report of Timothy appears to be particularly requisite. And first of all, I earnestly request as a favour conferred upon myself, and as a teacher of the Christian doctrine I se-

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[1] *We intreat and we exhort you.*] *We intreat.* "we request and desire it of you as a favour done to ourselves. *We exhort* implies superiority: it supposes both the capacity and the right of admonition." Chandler.

[2] *In* the *Lord Jesus.*] "in his name, by your regard to him; and as you would approve yourselves to him as your judge." Chandler. Newcome, who translates "*by* the Lord Jesus," observes, "Some render '*in* the Lord Jesus:' that is, as professors of faith in him." This appears to be the true sense of the phrase. *To be in Christ* is constantly used in the apostle's writings to signify being a Christian. See Rom. xvi. 7, 9, 11.

[3] *And as* indeed *ye do walk.*] This clause is found in the Alexandrine, Clermont, and many other manuscripts, and in the Æthiopic, Italic, and other versions. It is much in the apostle's style; who is always desirous to commend where he can, and especially previous to the introduction of a reproof. See Griesbach.

[4] *Excel.*] περισσευητε. "It expresses, having abundance or plenty of any thing: hence it denotes to *exceed* or *excel.* See Eccles. iii. 19, Apocryp. Syr. xi. 12, xix. 24." Chandler.

[5] *By* the authority of *the Lord Jesus.*] δια τε Κυριε. So Newcome and Wakefield.

Ch. IV. Ver. 2. riously exhort you, that you will remember and reduce to practice the advice which I gave you while I was present with you. I taught you, that as disciples of Jesus it must now be your governing principle to please God, and in the whole of your temper and conduct to approve yourselves to his all-penetrating eye. And I taught you how this was to be done; namely, by the love and practice of universal virtue. It gives me great satisfaction to hear that this is indeed your general character; and that with regard to most of you the efficacy of the doctrine of the gospel is apparent in the holiness of your lives. My desire is, that you should not rest satisfied with present attainments, but that you should continually endeavour to excel, not only your heathen neighbours, but even yourselves and one another; and that in this generous emulation you should make rapid advances towards perfection of character. For this you know was the purport of those solemn and often-repeated charges which I delivered to you as the apostle of Jesus Christ, in the name and by the authority of my Master, and yours; who will acknowledge none as his disciples but those who obey his laws, and follow his perfect example.

2. The apostle strongly insists upon the necessity of chastity, and solemnly warns the Thessalonians against those impurities which were the disgrace of the heathen world, ver. 3—8.

3. *For this is the will of God,* even *your sanctifica-*

tion[1]*: that ye should abstain from fornication*[2], Ch. IV.
that every one of you may know how to preserve 4.
his body[3] *in sanctity and honour, not in lewd pas-* 5.
sions like the heathen[4]*, who know not God; and* 6.
that no one *may transgress against*[5]*, nor injure*[6]

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[1] *Sanctification.*] "ἁγιασμος, καθαρευσις, Hesychius: separation from the pollutions of the world, and consecration to the purposes of eligion and virtue." Chandler.

[2] *Fornication.*] "πορνειας, every species of *lewdness:* so it is used by the best Greek writers." Chandler.

[3] *To preserve his body.*] σκευος, his *vessel.* "*Quippe etenim corpus, quod vas quasi constitit ejus.*" Lucr. iii. 441. See Newcome, Benson; and Chandler, who considers it as an allusion to vessels of the temple consecrated to God, and entitled to respect and reverence.

[4] *Lewd passions, like the heathen.*] εν παθει επιθυμιας. "The first word signifies the passions in general, the other signifies *desire* in general, particularly after riches, empire, pleasures, and especially after criminal lusts." See Chandler. Archbishop Newcome renders the words, "the passion of desire;" Mr. Wakefield, "lustful passions." Dr. Whitby, Dr. Benson, and Dr. Chandler, quote many passages from ancient writers, to show the extreme profligacy and shameless debauchery of the heathen world. Dr. Priestley remarks, "We may be surprised that the apostle should think it necessary to animadvert at all upon such vices as are recited in this address to Christians; but till men were apprized of the purity of the Christian precepts, they had no idea of much blame in very gross vices. But in a short time after, such things were not heard of among Christians. It is proper that these things should be observed, in order to give us a just idea of the value of Christianity, and how great a blessing it has been to mankind in a moral respect."

This excellent author, after noticing, upon ver. 3, some of the abominable practices which were used among the Egyptians, adds, "As the apostle observes, fleshly lusts war against the soul, and debase the mind. It is, however, the utter and manifest inconsistency of these vices with the Christian character, that gives many persons of the present age a dislike to it. For in these respects the maxims of modern unbelievers are as loose as those of the ancients."

[5] *Transgress against.*] υπερβαινειν· a stronger word than

Ch. IV. Ver. 6. *his brother*[1] *in this concern*[2]; *for the Lord* will *punish all such* offences[3], *even as we formerly declared and testified to you.*

And in the first place, my brethren, I cannot conceal my apprehensions that, having lately been converted from gross idolatry, you are not sufficiently apprized of the great stress which the gospel lays upon purity of character. You are required to live so as to please God, and I assure you that there is nothing which he more explicitly commands as an indispensable requisite to the attainment of his favour than an entire separation from the vices and abominable practices of your heathen state; and particularly from impurity in every degree and in every shape, in thought, word,

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ἁμαρτανειν; and signifies *to transgress* in a bold and aggravated manner. See Chandler, from Eustathius.

[6] *Nor injure.*] πλεονεκτειν. See Wakefield's *Silva Critica*, P. i. p. 106. "*to covet*, or *circumvent*." See Benson. "by craft and violence to defraud a man of his property." Chandler. Πλεονεξια is unquestionably used by the apostle to express *inordinate lusts*. In that sense it is probably used here. The apostle, to express himself decently, expresses himself obscurely. See Locke on Eph. iv. 19.

[1] *His brother:*] *i. e.* his fellow-Christian; but it would be equally criminal to act in the same manner with respect to heathen. Dr. Benson, therefore, conjectures that the apostle alludes to some particular fact which had been communicated to him by Timothy.

[2] *In this concern.*] εν τω πραγματι. See Wakefield, Newcome, &c. Raphelius and Chandler produce several quotations from ancient authors to show that the words have this sense. See 2 Cor. vii. 11.

[3] Will *punish all such* offences.] "will punish all these things." Wakefield. "εκδικος· he who punishes another justly for his crimes." Chandler. "is an avenger of all such." Newcome.

and deed. To please God you must be well skilled in the art of governing yourselves, and restraining your passions within the limits of virtue and honour. You must utterly forsake those lascivious practices which are so common amongst your heathen neighbours, and so disgraceful to their character. They, indeed, have an apology which you have not. They have no just conceptions of the character and attributes of God, of his word and will; they worship deities of their own invention, whose example encourages, and whose rites require the most odious impurities. The true God whom you have learned to worship is of a very opposite character. He is purity itself. He strictly prohibits every violation of the law of chastity, and has solemnly declared that such offences shall be visited with condign punishment. And this doctrine we inculcated upon you when we were with you, though I fear that some of you have almost forgotten it; and we at the same time solemnly assured you that what we delivered to you upon this subject was dictated by the highest authority. Ch. IV. Ver. 6.

For God hath not called us to impurity, but to holiness: he, therefore, who scorneth[4], *scorneth not* 7. 8.

[4] *He who scorneth.*] "ὁ αθετων, αθετει, ατιμαζει." Hesychius. "Proprie, *loco suo moveo, contemno et contumeliose tracto.*" Schleusner. "to reject any thing with contempt as false and groundless; or to throw it away with dishonour and scorn." Chandler. Gal. ii. 21; Jude ver. 8; comp. 2 Pet. ii. 10; Luke x. 16; John xii. 48. Dr. Benson observes, that "as the apostles honestly informed their converts that they must expect persecution, so they told them the truth notwithstanding their

Ch. IV. Ver. 8. *man but God, who hath given his spirit, that holy* spirit [1], *unto us.*

I speak and write by the authority of God, who hath invited us to participate in the privileges of the gospel, not to indulge ourselves in the uncontrouled gratification of the inferior powers of our nature, but to separate and distinguish us from the rest of mankind by purity and self-government. I fear that some of you, who are but imperfectly converted from the immoralities of your heathen state, may dislike the restrictions of the gospel, and may even be disposed to sneer and scornfully to reject my advice as unreasonable and impracticable, and contrary both to the doctrine and example of the most celebrated sages of the heathen world. But, let the presumptuous scorner know, that his contempt falls not upon weak and fallible men, but upon that God whose ministers and messengers we are; who, whatever they may think, has inspired us by his own spirit, the spirit of holiness and purity, to denounce in his name the most awful judge-

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prejudices, and did not draw in converts by the baits of sensual pleasure." He further adds, "that perhaps some of the younger or the more gay and thoughtless converts might be apt to smile at the apostle's strictness, considering how their heathen neighbours judged and acted, and the principles in which they had been educated. The apostle, therefore, here puts on an air of uncommon seriousness and gravity, and lets them know that the ridicule and contempt reached higher than they imagined." Dr. Chandler gives an excellent summary of the apostle's advice.

[1] *His spirit, that holy* spirit.] το πνευμα αὐτὸ το ἁγιον. See Macknight.

ments against those who violate the laws of chastity; and who will, another day, assuredly vindicate the honour of his word. Ch. IV. Ver. 8.

3. The apostle commends the affectionate and benevolent spirit of the Thessalonian believers, and exhorts them to cherish and extend it, ver. 9, 10.

Now, concerning brotherly kindness, we have no occasion to write[2] *to you, for ye are yourselves divinely instructed to love one another*[3]; *and indeed ye do this toward all the brethren throughout Macedonia: but we exhort you, brethren, to excel* therein *still more.* 9. 10.

I lament that the corrupt habits of your former life, and the imperfection of your views of that sublimity of character to which the gospel is intended to elevate us, has made it necessary for me to insist so much at large upon the virtue of chastity. It is with pleasure that I now advert to another duty in which you are known to excel, the duty of sympathy and kindness to your brethren in the faith, who are also, generally speaking, your brethren in affliction. To your honour be it spoken, you readily learned that divine lesson which is one of the first

[2] *We have no occasion to write.*] Dr. Benson observes, that this form of speaking plainly supposes that there was great need to write to them, to recommend purity and chastity. Some of the most approved manuscripts and versions read εχομεν. See Griesbach.

[3] *Divinely instructed,* &c.] *i.e.* "by the precepts of God in the gospel." Newcome. Benson remarks, "that the expression implies that they had not only been taught, but that they had also followed divine instruction." See Isai. liv. 13.

Ch. IV. Ver. 10. that is taught in the school of Christ, to love and to be kind to one another. And this lesson I rejoice to hear that you have practised, not only in your own city, but throughout your whole province: so that there is not a Christian brother in all Macedonia who needed your assistance to whom that assistance was denied. Go on, my brethren, in this honourable course. Aspire after yet greater excellence in this godlike virtue. The spirit of kindness and good-will is the genuine spirit of the gospel of Jesus.

4. The apostle exhorts them to prudence, peace, and industry, and to a conduct which might be creditable to their profession, ver. 11, 12.

11. *And that ye be ambitious*[1] *to be quiet*[2], *and to mind your own* concerns[3], *and to work with your*

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[1] *That ye be ambitious.*] So Wakefield. "that ye earnestly strive." Newcome. "φιλοτιμεισθαι 'to be actuated by the love of praise and honour;' hence it denotes great diligence and vigour in any affairs whatsoever. This is the true import of the word in the place before us; and it should have been rendered, 'that ye *diligently* or *earnestly* study.'" Chandler.

[2] *To be quiet.*] ἡσυχαζειν. "to live an orderly, quiet, and peaceable life; not to intermeddle with affairs which did not belong to them. Timothy had probably informed him that the Thessalonians were too much given to this busy, impertinent spirit, 2 Thess. iii. 6, which was too much the temper of the Grecians in general." Chandler. Perhaps some of the Christians at Thessalonica boasted that they were ambitious to manifest a public spirit, and were willing to neglect their own private affairs in order to become benefactors to the public; whereas the apostle's advice is, that they should be ambitious to be quiet, and to let other men's business alone.

[3] *And to mind your own concerns.*] πρασσειν τα ιδια· "to

own hands[4], *as we* formerly *charged you, that you may walk creditably*[5] *towards those* who are *without*[6], *and may want nothing*[7]. Ch. IV. Ver. 12.

I have reason to fear that some of you abuse the privileges of your profession to idleness and impertinence; and that in expectation of being maintained out of the common stock, and under pretence of zeal for the gospel, you neglect your proper

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confine themselves to their own particular affairs, without officiously meddling with the concerns of others." Chandler.

[4] *To work*, &c.] "The original word denotes *labouring* and *working* of any kind, and is particularly used of agriculture, and the employments which fall to the lot of the poorer sort of mankind." Chandler. It should seem that the converts at Thessalonica consisted chiefly of persons who maintained themselves by their industry.

[5] *Creditably*.] ευσχημονως. "Hesychius says, the word signifies those who move gracefully in dancing. Hence it signifies *decently* in general." Chandler. "becomingly." Newcome.

[6] *Without*:] *i. e.* the heathen who are without the pale of the church, Mark iv. 11; 1 Cor. iv. 12; Col. iv. 5.

[7] *And may want nothing*.] μηδενος χρειαν εχητε, *or may have need of no man*. Dr. Chandler observes, that "these admonitions were necessary in the beginning of Christianity, to prevent the reproach, that it took persons off from their labours and employments, and encouraged idleness in those who professed it." "Perhaps," says Dr. Benson, "under pretence of spreading Christianity, and of a zeal for the spiritual good of others, they neglected their own affairs, and brought on poverty. This led them to frequent the houses of those who were richer, by base flatteries to court their favour, pragmatically and officiously to concern themselves in their affairs, and to live upon their substance. Upon the rise of new sects such idle busy-bodies are more common. But they are out of the way of their duty, and bring up an ill report of religion; even though they should be daily and hourly talking upon religious subjects, or at every body's table, and in all companies, proclaiming their zeal against errors and heresies, and for promoting truth and purity. They are a common nuisance, and ought to be discouraged if the churches would have peace."

Ch. IV. Ver. 12. business, and officiously obtrude yourselves into the houses and company of persons with whom you have no concern, and thus, in a busy commercial city like Thessalonica, you expose the Christian religion to the scoffs of unbelievers, as though it encouraged an idle, intrusive, meddlesome disposition. Let such persons remember the advice we gave them when we were ourselves at Thessalonica. Let it be their ambition not to obtrude themselves where they are not wanted, and to proffer advice where it is not asked, but to live quietly at home; to attend to their own business, to maintain themselves and their families by their own industry: and thus to procure themselves an honourable independence, and to recommend Christianity to their neighbours, as a religion which not only insures future felicity, but which, by enjoining prudence and diligence, contributes likewise to the temporal advantage of its consistent professors.

SECTION VI.

THE APOSTLE forbids all extravagant lamentations over deceased Christians; and comforts the Thessalonians, by representing to them the Christian doctrine concerning the resurrection of the dead. Ch. iv. 13—18.

1. The apostle forbids extravagant lamentations

over the Christian dead, because of the assured expectation that God by Christ would raise them from the grave, ver. 13, 14. Ch. IV.

Now, we[1] *would not have you ignorant, brethren,* Ver. 13.
concerning those who are fallen asleep[2], *that ye*
grieve not[3] *even as others who have no hope*[4].
For as[5] *we believe that Jesus died and rose again,* 14.

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[1] *We would not, &c.*] Θελομεν. This is the reading of the best manuscripts, and is adopted into the text by Griesbach and Newcome.

[2] *Fallen asleep.*] Dr. Chandler observes, that "under this image of *sleep* death is frequently represented in the ancient writings both of Greece and Rome; and he produces some beautiful passages to this purpose. He adds, that "it is with unspeakably greater propriety that revelation speaks of death under the similitude of sleep; not only on account of its being release from all the labours and afflictions of life, but because it is to be succeeded by a resurrection to new life and vigour."

[3] *That ye grieve not.*] Dr. Benson justly remarks, that "Christianity aims not at rooting out the affections, but to moderate and duly regulate them. The apostle does not forbid them to sorrow at all, but to sorrow like those without hope.

[4] *Others who have no hope:*] i. e. the heathen world. The wisest philosophers spoke very doubtfully upon the subject. And the generality of the heathen world had no hope whatever concerning the dead: for if they believed them to exist at all, it was, even though in Elysium, in a state far inferior to what they enjoyed on earth. See Dr. Chandler, and the references in his notes. Lucian, in his treatise on *mourning*, gives an account of the popular belief concerning the dead; who were supposed to be confined in a deep place under the earth, void of all light. He also describes the extravagance of their mourning and lamentation upon the death of any of their valuable friends: "All were dissolved in tears, and nothing was to be seen but beating of breasts, pulling their hair, tearing their cheeks, rending their garments, throwing dust upon their heads, rolling upon the earth, and beating their heads against the ground; uttering the bitterest complaints, and breaking out into the most passionate lamentations."

[5] *For as we, &c.*] "εἰ signifies 'seeing that,' Rom. v. 10, 15;

Ch. IV. Ver. 14. *even so* we believe that *God through Jesus*[1] *will bring with him those who are fallen asleep.*

It gives me pain to learn that some valuable members of your society have been removed by death; and the more so as I hear that you have allowed yourselves in some extravagant expressions of grief upon the occasion which were quite unworthy your profession and expectations as believers in the gospel: especially as your sorrow was in a considerable degree enhanced by some erroneous opinion which you had taken up concerning the solemn appearance of Christ to judgement. Such passionate expressions of despair only become those who are utter strangers to the hope of the gospel. Allow me, then, to repeat, what you have so often heard before, the doctrine which the gospel teaches concerning the state of departed believers: who are not so properly speaking *dead*, as fallen into a deep, sound sleep, from which they are soon to be awakened, refreshed and vigorous, to a new and heavenly life. And with these views you will easily see how unreasonable it is for you to indulge in the same extravagance of grief which is pardonable in your

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1 Cor. xv. 11; Gal. iv. 7." Benson. Dr. Chandler observes, that the sentence is evidently defective; and ought to be thus translated: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so we also believe," &c.

[1] *Through Jesus.*] So Wakefield and Newcome. Chandler also prefers it, though it is allowed that διὰ with a genitive sometimes signifies *in*. Rom. ii. 27, iv. 11; 2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Tim. ii. 15. Observe, the apostle consoles his friends with the hope of a resurrection: he says nothing of their present happiness in an intermediate state.

heathen neighbours, who have no hope of a future life. Recollect then, my brethren, that the fundamental article of the Christian faith is, that Jesus died and rose again; that he did not suffer in appearance only, but in reality; and that he really, and in very deed, rose to a new and immortal life. If we do not know and firmly believe this fact, we are not the disciples of Jesus. But if we do believe, there is another equally important fact, which is inseparably connected with it; namely, that God by Christ will raise all those who now are, or who at his final appearance will be, asleep in their graves. And that he will return again for this glorious purpose is as certain, and as firmly believed by us, as that he himself is risen and is now alive. We cannot believe one without the other; for the event which has already taken place is the proof and pledge of that which is to succeed. When Jesus appears, God will by him raise the Christian dead, and introduce them into a state of glory and happiness with him, their revered and beloved master and Lord. Ch. IV. Ver. 14.

2. The apostle consoles them with the assurance that believers who are living when Christ returns will have no advantage over those who will then be dead; but that these likewise will be raised in time to bear their part in the awful solemnities of the scene, ver. 15—18.

Moreover, this we declare to you by the command 15.

Ch. IV. Ver. 15. *of the Lord*[1], *that we who are left alive*[2] *at the coming of the Lord shall not anticipate*[3] *those who are fallen asleep.*

I am informed that some of you apprehend that your dead friends will sustain some peculiar disadvantage, and in particular, that they will be deprived of that glorious and interesting spectacle which will be exhibited to the astonished world at the final awful appearance of Jesus Christ; when he

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[1] *By command.*] εν λογῳ. See Macknight; and Chandler, who observes, that the subject was of such a nature as could not be known without express revelation.

[2] *We who are left alive*, &c.] Grotius observes here, that Paul thought it possible that he might live to the time of the general judgement. To this opinion Dr. Chandler accedes, upon the principle "that the time of the general judgement is absolutely uncertain, and that it will come suddenly and unexpected." Our Lord expressly says, that the times and seasons the Father has reserved in his own power, Acts i. 7; and Mark xiii. 32 he declares, that the day and the hour when the Son of Man should come was concealed even from himself. It is of importance to remember, that the prediction of an event does not necessarily imply either the knowledge of the event, or of the season when it was to happen; and it seems not improbable that the apostles and primitive converts expected that the day of judgement would take place before the end of the generation then living. Most interpreters, however, understand the apostle in this passage as speaking of all Christians in all ages as constituting one body or people. See Deut. xxvi. 6—9; Ps. lxvi. 6; Matt. xxiii. 35. Benson, Newcome.

[3] *Shall not anticipate.*] ȣ μη φθασωμεν· "shall not be before, or go before." Newcome.—Mons. Saurin's conjecture, in his note upon this text, may possibly be just. The Thessalonian Christians were earnestly desirous of seeing the splendid spectacle of Christ's appearance to judgement, and bitterly lamented that their departed friends would be deprived of this grand exhibition: to alleviate these apprehensions, the apostle communicates to them the information in this paragraph. See Doddridge's note *in loc.*

returns to raise the dead and to judge the world, of which those of us who shall be then living will be the admiring witnesses: and I hear that this is the excuse which you offer for the extravagant tokens of your grief. But for this suspicion I assure you that there is no foundation. I am authorized by Jesus our revered Master himself, to declare that those of us, whosoever they may be, who may happen to live to the awful period of his second coming, shall in this respect have no advantage over our sleeping brethren; and that we shall not be introduced to this magnificent scene a moment sooner than those who will be at rest in the tomb. Ch. IV. Ver. 15.

For the Lord himself[4] *will descend from heaven* 16.

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[4] *For the Lord himself,* &c.] This pompous representation of the descent of Christ to raise the dead and to judge the world, is intended to excite in the mind of the reader an awful sense of the solemnity and importance of that great event. How far it is to be accomplished in any thing like a literal sense the event itself can alone explain. The representation seems to be that of a conqueror advancing in a triumphal procession, attended with the acclamations of the spectators: a herald proclaiming his commission, and trumpets announcing his approach. Some suppose that the shout is the voice of Christ himself; but the word more properly expresses the acclamation of numbers. The word *archangel,* or principal messenger, seems to mean nothing more than the officer appointed for the purpose; as we say "the principal herald at arms." And the *trump of God* is a loud-sounding trumpet, alluding probably to the trumpet on Mount Sinai. Mr. Evanson thinks that the apostle here refers to the sound of the archangel's trumpet in the Apocalypse, Rev. xvi. 17; and infers from it that this epistle was written after the Apocalypse, and that the apostle bears testimony to it as divinely inspired; but the argument, though ingenious, does not appear to be so conclusive as the learned writer seems to apprehend. See Evanson.—*With acclamation.* Worsley.

Ch. IV. Ver. 16. *with acclamation, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

A most magnificent and awful spectacle it will indeed be; such as no human tongue can tell, no human heart conceive. Jesus, who was once dead, but is now alive and ascended into the highest heavens, will then descend from his throne of glory in all the pomp of a conqueror in a triumphal procession. His followers and friends will joyfully greet him, and with loud acclamations will hail his approach: celestial heralds will proclaim his commission; and a trumpet, far louder and more energetic than that which once sounded upon Mount Sinai, will rouse the astonished universe, will even penetrate the tomb, and summon the whole race of mankind to appear at the dread tribunal. Under such imagery, though infinitely short of the sublime reality, may some faint conception of the grandeur and solemnity of the scene be conveyed to the mind. One fact, however, is literally true; that is, that all who have died in the faith of Jesus shall be raised to life before any change takes place in those who will then be the living inhabitants of the earth.

17. *Afterward, we who are left alive will be caught up*[1] *together with them into the clouds, to meet the*

[1] *Caught up:*] literally, "snatched up;" it expresses not a voluntary act of their own, but an effect suddenly, forcibly, and supernaturally produced. See Chandler. What will really happen, in this as in the former case, the event alone can disclose.

Lord in the air; and so we shall ever be with the Lord[2]. Ch. IV. Ver. 17.

Immediately after this astonishing event, and not, as you apprehend, before it, we whose lives may be prolonged to this awful period, shall undergo a great and instantaneous change; for we shall be exempt from the stroke of death, and shall be suddenly transformed into the resemblance of our glorified Master. And then, in company with those who have been raised to life, we shall be at once, by a divine energy, transported into the clouds to meet our descending Lord in the regions of the atmosphere; and after having been acquitted at his

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[2] *And so we shall ever,* &c.] Dr. Priestley observes, that "the phrase 'being with the Lord' evidently refers to the state after the resurrection. It is after the meeting of the Lord in the air, and not before, that any persons are said to be with him. On the hypothesis of the dead being supremely happy, and continuing to be so till the resurrection, it would have been so far from being necessary to have informed them, that those who should be alive at the coming of Christ would have no advantage over those who had been dead; that these would have had a great and manifest advantage over their brethren, having enjoyed the greatest happiness in the presence of God and of Christ many ages before them. All that the apostle was able to say was, that they who are now dead shall not be upon the whole in a worse condition than those who shall be alive, because they would be raised to immortal life before any change should take place in the living." It is evident that the apostle is here speaking only of the resurrection of the just: the dead in Christ, true believers. His subject did not lead him to treat of the resurrection of the wicked. It is a very unjust insinuation of Orobio the Jew, in his controversy with Limborch, and afterwards of Mr. Gibbon, that the apostle made proselytes to Christianity by persuading men that believers should be translated to a state of happiness without dying. See Doddridge and Macknight; also Limborch's *Coll.* p. 75.

Ch. IV. Ver. 17. bar, and acknowledged by him as his friends, we shall be admitted to his society, and shall spend a happy eternity with him and with each other, in the best company and in the most delightful and useful employments.

18. *Wherefore comfort*[1] *ye one another with these declarations.*

These important facts, which I have thus stated, you may firmly depend upon as a revelation from God, which it will be your wisdom to improve both for exhortation and comfort. Exhort one another, my Christian brethren, to be diligent and unwearied in your preparation for this awful scene, that when your Lord cometh, whether it be sooner or later, you may be in a proper posture to receive him, and may not be ashamed in his presence. Also, console one another with these glorious truths. When you lose your pious friends by death, remind each other that they are only fallen into a sound and undisturbed repose, from which they will soon awake, refreshed and vigorous, to a happy and immortal life. And, in the prospect of your own speedy dissolution, let not your spirits be unreason-

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[1] *Comfort ye,* &c.] The word signifies both to *comfort* and to *exhort;* and, as Dr. Chandler observes, "the apostle might intend to be understood in both senses." Dr. Priestley remarks, "This is abundant consolation. It may, indeed, appear more desirable to enter upon a state of happiness immediately after death; and this may be a reason why Christians are so ready to adopt this opinion. But we ought to be satisfied with the happiness which God has promised us, and which will be revealed in due time: viz. at the resurrection of the just."

ably depressed. Jesus, your pattern and your chief, died and rose again; and because he lives, we shall live also. Ch. IV.

APPENDIX TO SECT. VI.

THE interpretation which is given to this passage by the late learned and ingenious Newcome Cappe, in his *Essays on Sacred Scripture*, vol. ii. is so extraordinary, and so remote from the common interpretation, that it would not be doing justice to the reader not to state it.

He supposes that the Thessalonian Christians expected that Christ would soon return to establish a temporal kingdom in the world, from the privileges and blessings of which those would of course be excluded who were not converted to the Christian faith. That on this account many were in distress because of their unconverted friends, who, in the language of the apostle, are said to be asleep. And that the design of the apostle is to console them with the hope that many of their friends who were now heathens and idolaters would be converted, not in time to become subjects of the temporal reign which was never to take place, but in time to enter nearly at the same time with them, that is, at death, upon their future everlasting reward in the presence of Christ.

"Ver. 13. Your concern for those friends who are not yet awakened to receive Jesus and his go-

Ch. IV. spel, is indeed to be commiserated, yet it is not altogether a hopeless case.

" 14. The coming of Christ is not a personal but a figurative advent. Personally, Jesus is in heaven. The awakening of these sleepers is not beyond the power of him who brought Jesus from the dead. The power to which Jesus is exalted encourages some hope that by means of Jesus, that is, through the holy spirit, many who have hitherto been insensible to his call, God will collect and unite to him, to partake in the glories of the heavenly state.

" 15. For this I must tell you εν λογῳ, *in the language of the Lord*, that we who are already Christians shall not be beforehand with them who are yet unawakened, if, in the end, they be recovered, and brought to the acknowledgement and obedience of the truth.

" 16. Christ will indeed come from heaven while many are yet living; as heretofore by the holy spirit, so by and by in many signal and alarming events. But this coming does not promise to those who *are* Christians any advantage over those who hereafter may be such. The resurrection of the friends whom we are now lamenting may happen first.

" 17. And it will not be till after that, together with them, and not before them, or without them, we and they indiscriminately, as we are summoned out of this world, shall be conveyed in clouds to dwell with Christ in heaven. *Thus*, not otherwise; *then*, not sooner; *there*, not elsewhere,

shall we be with the Lord, and with each other, for ever. Ch. IV.

"18. Wherefore, comfort one another concerning the spiritually dead, whom ye lament and love, with considerations such as these."

I am almost tempted to say that, if such an interpretation is admissible, it is impossible for words to convey distinct ideas. But I correct myself: for it often happens that interpretations which appear most natural to one, appear the reverse to another. And, as Dr. Price says, we are apt to wonder at one another. I have no doubt that the pious and ingenious author was fully satisfied of the justness of his interpretation; and it helped him over a great difficulty in his hypothesis, that the resurrection takes place immediately after death. But it may be permitted to ask, if this be the true sense of the text, how came it to escape every preceding interpreter, ancient and modern?

SECTION VII.

THE APOSTLE exhorts the Thessalonians to prepare for the appearance of Christ, arguing particularly from the uncertainty of the precise time when this great event shall take place. Ch. v. 1—11. Ch. V.

1. He reminds them that Christ will appear at

Ch. V. a season when he is least expected by the unbelieving world, ver. 1—3.

Ver. 1. *But concerning the exact time*[1], *brethren, there is no occasion*[2] *that I should write to you.*

With respect to that awful event which is the subject of our discourse, the final appearance of Jesus Christ to raise the dead and to judge the world, I have already stated all that is necessary to confirm your faith, to govern your practice, and to administer to your consolation; and particularly to remove the apprehensions you entertained with respect to the superior advantages of the living believers above the dead at that interesting crisis. As to the exact period when this important event will take place, I have nothing to add to what I mentioned to you while I resided among you, and which you no doubt recollect.

2. *For ye yourselves know perfectly*[3] *that the day of the Lord*[4] *is coming*[5], *even as a thief by night*[6].

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[1] *The exact time.*] So Wakefield. Literally, "the times and seasons;" χρονοι, *times*, denotes large periods; καιροι, *seasons*, particular times when particular events were to take place. See Chandler. Acts i. 7; Eccles. iii. 1; Dan. ii. 27.

[2] *There is no occasion.*] Some good copies read χρεια εστι. See Griesbach. "it need not be written to you." Wakefield.

[3] *Know perfectly.*] "from the tenor of my instructions." Newcome. See also Benson and Chandler.

[4] *The day of the Lord.*] Hammond interprets this phrase, "of the destruction of Jerusalem." Dr. Benson believes him to be singular in this interpretation, and confuted by Le Clerc and Whitby; the latter expositor thinks that the apostle is treating of both events.

[5] *Is coming.*] So Wakefield. Macknight remarks, that "the verbs are in the present tense in this paragraph, to denote the

You cannot have forgotten what I taught you by the authority of Christ himself: that the awful crisis is rapidly advancing, and that it will eventually come upon us when least expected; just as a thief breaks into a house at midnight, when all the family are asleep and secure, not entertaining the least apprehension of so disastrous an event. In fact, the hour of our Lord's appearance is absolutely unknown to all of us; nor will he give notice of the precise time of the event, any more than a thief gives notice of the hour when he intends to rob the house. Ch. V. Ver. 2.

While men *are saying peace*[7] *and security, then sudden destruction is coming upon them, as pangs upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.* 3.

The event of Christ's coming to judgement will be as sudden and as calamitous to the generation

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certainty and instantaneousness of the event." This might lead to the mistake which gave occasion to the second epistle.

[6] *A thief by night.*] By this comparison our Lord himself illustrates the unexpectedness of his coming, Matt. xxiv. 43; see also 2 Pet. iii. 10, Rev. iii. 3. "to denote," says Dr. Chandler, "the uncertainty of the time, the unexpectedness of the event, and the state of security and fearlessness in which mankind should be involved." "The apostle's expressions of uncertainty as to the precise time of this event are so far (says this learned writer) from being any reflection upon his authority, that it is rather a proof of his integrity and prudence, in that he plainly acknowledges that he had no revelation in this article."

[7] *While saying peace,* &c.] This circumstance is taken notice of by our Lord himself, "from whom (says Dr. Chandler) I doubt not but the apostle had it." Matt. xxiv. 39, 40; see also 2 Pet. iii. 4.

Ch. V. Ver. 3. then living, as the deluge to the generation which were overwhelmed by it. Men will be thinking of nothing less than the catastrophe that is approaching; they will be immersed in vanity and pleasure, and will ridicule the expectation of Christians as a weak and unmanly superstition. But in an hour when they least expect it, the awful catastrophe will burst upon them, like the pangs of child-birth, and will overwhelm them in universal and inevitable ruin.

2. Christians being forewarned of this event, ought to hold themselves in a state of habitual preparation for it, ver. 4—6.

4. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness* [1], *that the day should overtake you as a thief.*

The heathen world do not know, and will not believe, that such a catastrophe will ever take place: whenever it shall come, therefore, it must be to them a day of surprise and terror. But you, my brethren, are better informed: you are assured that this event is actually approaching, though you know not the exact hour of its arrival: it ought not, therefore, to be an object of surprise or dread to you; you ought to be, and I trust you are, in a state of habitual preparation for it.

5. *Ye all are sons of light* [2], *and sons of day; we*

[1] *In darkness.*] "Darkness," says Dr. Benson, "does not here mean *wickedness*, but gross ignorance in matters of religion. John iii. 20, Eph. v. 8." "καταλαβῃ, should surprise you." Wakefield.

are not sons *of night and of darkness: therefore let us not sleep*[3] *as others* do, *but let us keep watch*[4] *and be sober.* C IV. Ver. 6.

The idolatrous and unbelieving world are involved in midnight darkness; they see nothing before them, and they sleep or riot in the midst of danger and on the verge of destruction. But you, my brethren, who are believers in the doctrine of Christ, are brought out of darkness into broad daylight: you see your true state, you know what important events are at hand. You have learned how you may best prepare for them; so that what will to others be a season of terror and dismay, will to you, if you improve your knowledge, be a time of joy and triumph. From us believers the thick veil of ignorance and of prejudice has been removed: we are no longer under the dark and dangerous

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[2] *Sons of light*, &c.] "A usual hebraism, which implies that one thing is in some respect the cause of another. *Light* is properly the parent and original of every Christian as such: they are formed as Christians in their principles, tempers, and lives, by the heavenly light of gospel truth." Chandler. "*υἱος, hebraismus: sæpe dicitur de eo qui* studiosus, *vel* particeps *est alicujus rei.*" Rosenmuller.

[3] *Let us not sleep.*] "Sleep is here taken in the figurative sense, to denote the thoughtless, indolent, careless, secure and fearless temper of mind, which is the condition of persons oppressed with natural sleep." Chandler.

[4] *Let us keep watch,*] "that we may guard against surprise, and prevent danger." Chandler; who adds, that "Christians are to consider themselves as engaged in a hazardous warfare against subtle and powerful enemies; in which the want of vigilance and sobriety would be as truly criminal, and as certainly destructive, as in a soldier to be dissolved in sleep, or enfeebled by drunkenness."

Ch. V. Ver. 6. delusion of idolatry and superstition. Our conduct, therefore, ought to correspond with our advantages. We have not the same excuse that others have for negligence and vice. Enlightened as we are by the cheering beams of the gospel, let us avoid the indolence, the false security, the criminal excesses, of our idolatrous neighbours: let us rouse ourselves to the active discharge of duty, and, like soldiers upon guard, let us by vigilance, fidelity, and temperance, approve ourselves to our exalted Chief.

3. It is the indispensable duty of those who profess themselves the faithful disciples of Christ, to gird on the armour of the gospel, and vigorously to perform the duties of their post, in expectation of the promised reward, ver. 7—10.

7. *For those who sleep, sleep by night; and those who are drunken, are drunken by night*[1].

The darkness of heathenism affords some plausible excuse for indolence and indifference; and countenances, or shelters, the most licentious practices: as the shades of the night are by some allotted to repose, and by others they are made the screen for intemperance and excess, of which they would be ashamed in open day.

8. *But let us who are of the day be sober, putting*

[1] *Drunken by night.*] "Raphelius produces passages from Polybius, to prove that it was regarded as disgraceful by the heathen to be seen intoxicated in the day-time." Dr. Chandler; who adds, "I wish this was universally true in our times."

on the breastplate of faith and love, and for *a helmet the hope of salvation*[2]. Ch. V. Ver. 8.

Let us then, my brethren, who have emerged from the dark gloom of heathenism and prejudice, and who enjoy the glorious light of the gospel-day, renounce the disgraceful deeds of darkness, and carefully avoid all intemperance and excess. As faithful and vigilant sentinels upon guard, let us gird on the armour of the gospel. And, in particular, let us defend the heart, and guard against all unreasonable and criminal affections by a steady and practical faith in the discoveries of the gospel; and by ardent active love to God and man. And let the glorious hope of immortality, founded on the promises of the gospel, be a helmet to defend us from the poisoned arrows of popular superstition, and to preserve the intellect ever calm and clear for the investigation of moral and Christian truth.

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[2] *Putting on the breastplate,* &c.] The apostle here pursues the allegory of a soldier upon duty; and gives the Christian suitable armour for the parts most exposed, and where the wounds would be most dangerous. I have adopted Dr. Chandler's explanation of the fitness of the armour for the part to which it is applied: "*faith* and *love* for the breast, the seat of the affections; and *hope of salvation* for the head, the seat of reason." I am not, however, without some doubts whether this be not carrying the allegory further than the apostle intended; who perhaps meant nothing more than that faith, and love, and hope, were the best defence of a Christian against the superstitions and the vices of the heathen world. "*Ostendit quomodo præparare se debeant Christiani ad diem illum, nempe* fide, amore, spe. *Instructus his virtutibus, paratus est quandocunque ille dies venerit.* Πιστις, *firmissima persuasio Jesum esse Messiam, auctorem nostræ salutis.* αγαπη, *benevolentia erga omnes homines.* ελπις, *spes æternæ salutis.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. V. Ver. 9. *For God hath not appointed*[1] *us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ;*

10. *who died for us*[2], *that whether we be awake or asleep*[3] when he appears, *we may live together with him.*

It is with good reason that I remind you of the hope of salvation; for though the appearance of Christ will be for the destruction of the unbelieving world, it will issue in the final triumph of his faithful disciples. For let me assure you, God does not intend our punishment, but our deliverance from sin and death, at that awful season, when his son shall return to raise the dead and to judge the world. He once appeared in a humble form, and suffered death to ratify that covenant which imparts to us the blessings of life; and which insures final and everlasting felicity in the presence of God and

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[1] *God hath not appointed,* &c.] See John iii. 15; to which there is perhaps an allusion here.

[2] *Who died for us.*] "Christ died for us men, and for our salvation; inasmuch as by his blood he sealed and established that new covenant, wherein pardon of sin, and a resurrection to eternal life, are promised to all sincere penitents, and prevailingly holy persons." Benson.

[3] *Asleep.*] We have here a remarkable instance of the apostle's custom of changing the ideas which he annexes to his words, without previous notice to the reader. In this passage the word *sleep* is used in no less than three different senses: ver. 7, it signifies natural rest; ver. 6, it expresses remissness and negligence in the practice of duty; and here, ver. 10, it is unquestionably used to express the sleep of death. See Benson. —"*Sensus est, ut sive superstites, sive mortui deprehendamur die illo extremo, pariter omnes beate cum Christo vivamus.* ἅμα, *pariter omnes,* ut Rom. iii. 12." Rosenmuller. *q. d.* we may all live with one another, and with him.

Christ to every sincere believer, whether it be his lot to be found alive or dead at the season of the great consummation of all things. Ch. V. Ver. 10.

4. The apostle closes the subject with a suitable exhortation, ver. 11.

Therefore encourage[4] *one another and edify*[5] *each other, as indeed ye do*[6]. 11.

Upon the whole, therefore, considering the certainty and importance of the second advent of Christ, the uncertainty of the time when it shall take place, and your own interest in it, let me earnestly exhort you seriously to reflect upon it, and to apply these weighty considerations to the best purposes. Encourage one another in the practice of duty; comfort one another under suffering and bereavement: improve each other in faith and love, in fortitude and piety. But I need not enlarge upon this topic. It is with great satisfaction that I hear how solicitous you are to promote each others advancement in Christian virtue; and I am persuaded that you are making rapid progress towards Christian perfection.

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[4] *Encourage.*] παρακαλειτε. The word is the same as that which is used ch. iv. 18; which shows that the apostle is still insisting upon the same subject. It signifies either *to comfort* or *to exhort.*

[5] *Edify:*] or, build up. "improve each other." Wakefield.

[6] *As indeed ye do.*] Dr. Benson observes that "the apostle took every opportunity of speaking well of them where there was a foundation for it;" and adds that "praise mixed with exhortation renders it both more agreeable and of greater efficacy."

SECTION VIII.

Ch. V. *THE APOSTLE concludes with some appropriate exhortations, with a general salutation, and with the apostolical benediction.* Ch. v. 12—28.

1. The apostle recommends respectful and affectionate behaviour to their faithful teachers and superintendants, ver. 12, 13.

Ver. 12. *Now we intreat you, brethren, to acknowledge those who labour*[1] *among you, and preside over*
13. *you in the Lord*[2]*, and admonish you: and to*

[1] *Acknowledge those,* &c.] As no mention is made of bishops and deacons in either of the epistles to the Thessalonians, it is conjectured that the church was not then completely organized, and that its officers had not, at the time when the apostle wrote, assumed those names. But when a church was formed in any city, it was customary, and indeed absolutely requisite for the good order of the society, to select a few of the most intelligent and experienced persons to superintend the affairs of the society and to conduct public worship. These, whether regular presbyters or temporary officers, are the persons of whom the apostle is here speaking; and their office, as Dr. Chandler observes, was threefold: they were labourers in the ministry of the word, see 1 Cor. xv. 10, 1 Tim. v. 17; they presided in the meetings of the society, 1 Tim. *ibid.*; and they admonished, *i. e.* they exhorted and reproved, their hearers. The word denotes, says Dr. Chandler, affection and authority. The duties enjoined upon the Thessalonians towards their teachers were also threefold: they were to *know*, i. e. to reverence and respect them; to love them exceedingly; and to live in peace with them. See Chandler and Benson.

[2] *In the Lord.*] "in things relating to Christianity." Newcome.

love them exceedingly on account of their office; and live in peace with them[3]. Ch. V. Ver. 13.

I now proceed to offer a few hints of advice, as to your conduct towards the officers of the church. I mean those respectable persons who on account of superior age, experience, wisdom, and piety, were selected from among you to labour in the ministry of the gospel, to preach the doctrine of Christ to their unbelieving countrymen, and to preside in your Christian assemblies, to preserve order and decorum when you meet together for public worship; whose duty it is to instruct the ignorant, to admonish the irregular, and to maintain discipline and order in the church. Their office, while it is exercised with prudence, fidelity, and kindness, is both honourable and laborious, and in a high degree useful: it also exposes them to peculiar hazard. I intreat and I charge you therefore, my Christian brethren, to acknowledge these your superintendants under the character with which they are invested; to submit to their authority, to listen to their instructions, and to receive with humility and thankfulness their just and faithful animadversions and reproofs. Treat them with respect, provide liberally for their subsistence. Love them exceed-

[3] *Live in peace with them.*] αυτοις. This is the reading of the Clermont and other manuscripts, and of many of the ancient versions. The common reading, ἑαυτοις, is also well supported, and gives a very good sense; though the other seems more agreeable to the connexion, and is marked by Griesbach as probable. "to live in peace with them, because of their office." Wakefield.

Ch. V. Ver. 13. ingly, as indeed you ought, for the firmness and faithfulness with which they discharge the hazardous and painful duties of their station. Do not resent the freedom of their reproofs; and do not put them into competition with each other, and split yourselves into parties under different leaders.

2. He reminds the presidents of the Christian society of the duties of their office, ver. 14.

14. *But we exhort you, brethren*[1], *admonish those who are disorderly*[2]; *comfort the feeble-minded*[3],

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[1] *We exhort you, brethren.*] "I think," says Dr. Benson, "with the Greek and Latin interpreters, that the apostle here turned his address from the people to their spiritual guides and teachers; and that he exhorted them to do what in the preceding verses he had intimated to be their peculiar work and office." Dr. Hammond thought these officers to have been the bishops of the several churches subject to the metropolitan church of Thessalonica. "But," says Dr. Benson, "what may we not say if we indulge to fancy, or give way to warm imagination? The scripture is an utter stranger to metropolitan bishops with their suffragans, or to metropolitan churches with their subordinate churches: every congregation was a Christian church, and none of them subject to any other." Macknight agrees with Benson, that this exhortation is addressed to the teachers.

[2] *Disorderly.*] ατακτους. "This," says Dr. Chandler, "is a military term, and denotes a soldier that breaks his ranks, deserts his post, or neglects his duty." It here alludes to that impertinent intrusion into other men's affairs, upon which the apostle insists more at large in the second epistle. 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12.

[3] *Feeble-minded.*] ολιγοψυχους, *those of little souls.* It is used in the Old Testament as a translation of what in the Hebrew signifies *the humble in spirit.* Isa. lvii. 15. Dr. Chandler, from Aristotle, explains it of a person "who has a mistaken opinion of himself, and indulges worse thoughts of his own condition than he ought to do." Some of the Thessalonians might be oppressed with a sense of guilt, and others with a dread of per-

succour the weak[4], *be of a patient spirit toward all*[5]. Ch. V. Ver. 14.

And as to you, my brethren in the ministry, I earnestly beseech you to persevere faithfully in performing the duties of your office, even such as require no small share of resolution and self-denial. Remind those who neglect their own concerns to meddle with the affairs of others, that the Christian religion requires that every man should attend to his proper business. Administer comfort to the dejected and desponding mind that distrusts its own resolutions, despairs of its final safety, and always bodes the worst. Afford needful assistance to those whose faith is feeble and wavering; who do not enter thoroughly into the liberal spirit of the gospel, and are in bondage to former superstitions. Teach them the rational and manly simplicity of the doctrine of Christ, and help them to throw off the yoke

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secution. These were men who needed consolation and encouragement. "*Eos qui in adversis animo sunt dejecto.*" Rosenmuller.

[4] *Succour the weak.*] αντεχεσθε. It signifies, to assist a person who is holding a burden at one end, by laying hold of it at the other. *q. d.* lend a helping hand, &c. See Rom. viii. 26. The *weak* were probably persons of scrupulous consciences, who laid stress upon rites and ceremonies, distinctions of food, and observance of days, &c.; being ignorant of the liberal spirit of the gospel. The superintendants of the church were to bear with their prejudices, and gradually to instruct them in the liberal spirit of the gospel. See Rom. xiv., xv., 1 Cor. viii. Benson and Chandler.

[5] *Of a patient spirit.*] So Worsley. μακροθυμειτε. "The prejudices of some, the stupidity and want of capacity of others, and the infirmities of mankind in general, call for tenderness and great patience." Benson.

Ch. V. Ver. 14. of servitude. Finally, bear patiently with those who are ignorant and dull, and even with those who are obstinate and refractory, and do not hastily give up your attempts to be useful, nor relax your exertions to instruct or to reclaim.

3. The apostle recommends mutual forbearance and universal good-will, and presses the duties of habitual cheerfulness, prayer, and thanksgiving, ver. 15—18.

15. *Beware*[1] *that none render evil for evil to any* one; *but always pursue kindness to each other and to all* men.

Acquire, my brethren, (and I now address you all,) the magnanimous and forgiving spirit of the gospel. Among your heathen neighbours it is accounted as honourable to avenge yourselves upon an enemy, as to requite a friend. Be you vigilantly upon your guard against this revengeful spirit. On the contrary, make it your study and your ambition to do good, and to show kindness to all men, upon all occasions; not only to Christians, but to unbelievers; not only to friends, but even to enemies:

[1] *Beware.*] "Ὁρατε," says Dr. Chandler, "often denotes, *take heed, beware.*" The apostle, now addressing the society at large, forbids the retaliation of injuries; which was a practice very common, and much approved both by Jews and heathen. Matt. v. 43. "But the words," as Dr. Chandler observes, "are to be understood of private revenge only, not of seeking to the magistrate for protection from injury and violence. This is often necessary to the preservation of the public peace. But Christianity entirely forbids all private malice, enmity, and revenge: the instruction is absolute and universal."

bless those who curse you, and pray for those who persecute you. Ch. V.

Be always joyful[2]. Ver. 16.

Let no losses, persecutions, or bereavements, depress your spirits, and produce unreasonable dejection. Your relation to God as your Father, your expectation of the speedy appearance of Jesus Christ, and your assured hope of living for ever with him in glory and happiness, may well comfort your darkest hours; and inspire you with an habitual joy and triumph, which the vicissitudes of life can neither destroy nor interrupt.

Pray without ceasing[3]. 17.

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[2] *Joyful.*] "The advice means, Ever maintain a cheerful, easy, happy disposition in every condition and circumstance of life; not only in peace and plenty, but under affliction and persecution for righteousness' sake." Chandler. See Matt. v. 11, 12; 1 Pet. iv. 13, 14; Rom. v. 2.

[3] *Pray without ceasing.*] Prayer is a direct address to God: but it is not at all essential to prayer that it should consist wholly or chiefly of petition. Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and the like, are at least equally becoming and equally important. The apostle could not mean to advise the Thessalonians to be always actually engaged in prayer, for that would be impossible. But he might mean to recommend an habitual impression of God upon the mind, and a spirit of habitual devotion. "This," says Dr. Priestley, "it is our duty and great happiness to cultivate. It is the perfection of the religious temper and character." The apostle is generally and justly thought to allude to the morning and evening sacrifice in the temple, which is called the continual burnt-offering, Exod. xxix. 38—42, Numb. xxviii. 24—31. The hours of sacrifice were nine in the morning and three in the afternoon; and these were the hours of prayer to the devout Jews, either in the temple or in private. And it is in allusion to this custom that the expressions, "dwelling in the house of God for ever;" "serving him day and night in his temple;" "Anna departed not from the temple," Luke ii. 37; "the apostles were in the tem-

Ch. V. Ver. 17. Let your lives be scenes of habitual uninterrupted intercourse with God. Meditate upon his character; adore his attributes; rejoice in his government; confide in his care; submit to his will; aspire after his favour; and express these grateful and joyful emotions of your hearts in suitable and appropriate language in the proper stated seasons of secret or of social worship, which will be more acceptable to God than the morning and the evening sacrifice. And let the fear and love of God possess and govern your hearts.

18. *At all times*[1] *give thanks, for this is the will of God, through Christ Jesus, concerning you.*

Possessed of the privileges, and animated by the hopes of the gospel, it becomes you, my Christian friends, at all times to maintain a grateful spirit. Be thankful, therefore, in adversity as in prosperity; in sickness as in health; in persecution as in a season of peace and liberty; under losses and bereavements as in the enjoyment of wealth and friends; in death as in life. This is the true spirit of the gospel; this is the spirit which God expects and requires of you, and for which the mission and doctrine of Christ lay a just and ample foundation.

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ple continually," Luke xxiv. 53; &c. are to be understood. In this view the apostle is understood to recommend praying constantly, morning and evening. See an excellent note of Dr. Benson's on the text.

[1] *At all times.*] So Mr. Wakefield; who thinks καιρῳ, or χρονῳ, to be understood here, as in 1 Tim. iv. 8, and elsewhere. "For every thing give thanks." Newcome. "Upon all suitable occasions, and in all the various events of life." Chandler.

4. The apostle offers advice concerning spiritual gifts, ver. 19—22. Ch. V.

Quench not the spirit[2]. Ver. 19.

Extinguish not that holy fire which has been kindled amongst you. Neglect not those gifts of the spirit with which you are severally endowed; use them not upon improper occasions; apply them not to improper purposes; interrupt not each other in the exercise of them; value them in proportion to their real importance; tempt not God to withdraw them from you; improve them to promote the knowledge and the success of the gospel.

Undervalue not prophesyings[3]; *but* (like good money-changers) *prove all things*[4]; *hold fast the best*[5]; *abstain from every kind of evil*[6]. 20, 21. 22.

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[2] *Quench not*, &c.] A beautiful allusion to Acts ii. 3, 4, where the descent of the holy spirit is said to have been accompanied with the appearance of tongues or spiral forms of flame, and to have resided upon each of the disciples present. A similar allusion is made by the apostle, 2 Tim. i. 6. "The spiritual gifts," says Dr. Benson, "like the fire upon the altar, could be kindled only from heaven; but might be stirred up, fed with fuel, or quenched by men."

[3] *Undervalue not*, &c.] ἐξουθενειτε· "the word signifies," says Dr. Chandler, "a supercilious contempt of another, arising from pride and haughtiness, and overvaluing one's own qualifications.'" προφητειας, *prophecy;* which was of two kinds: foretelling future events, or public instruction; sometimes, probably, by supernatural suggestion. It appears from 1 Cor. xiv. that this gift was greatly undervalued in comparison with the gift of tongues, which, though more showy, was of less use. That chapter is a complete commentary upon this text; which, as is usual in epistolary writings, would otherwise have been totally unintelligible to us, though easily understood by those to whom the epistle was addressed. See Benson *in loc.*

[4] *But* (like good money-changers) *prove all things.*] δε (*but*) is found in the best copies, and is admitted by Griesbach. It

Ch. V. Ver. 22. There is a diversity in spiritual gifts. Some are more showy, and therefore more coveted, than others. To be enabled to instruct others in the doctrine of Christ is, however, a gift more useful than any of the rest, even though it may not be accompanied with the graces of elocution. Let not, then, this gift be undervalued and made light of; but let it be most highly esteemed by you. I do not, however, mean to say that you are to admit as

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connects this with the preceding verse. "*Paulus dicit, γινεσθε φρονιμοι τραπεζιται, be skilful money-changers, prove all things.*" Cyril. This sentence is also cited by Origen, Chrysostom, and many other ecclesiastical writers, as a text of scripture; some ascribing it to Christ, and others to Paul. It is not, however, to be found in any copy or version of the New Testament now extant. Perhaps, therefore, Lardner is right in the conclusion, that "a passage so often quoted, if it had ever been in the New Testament, could never have been lost out of it." The writers, therefore, who cite it, could in this case only mean that the advice was to be found in sense, but not in words: *q. d.* as dealers in money take great pains to distinguish the genuine from counterfeit coin, so do you take pains to distinguish between true and false doctrine. See Lardner's *Credib.* part ii. vol. iii. p. 376. It may, however, reasonably be suspected that the words would not have been so often quoted had they not been found in some ancient copies, and believed to be genuine. Upon the authority of Cyril, therefore, I introduce them in this place, where they suit the connexion; but I introduce them with much hesitation. Dr. Whitby very justly observes, that "the apostle does not here bid the guides of the church try all things, and the people hold fast what they deliver unto them; but gives an injunction common to all Christians."

[5] *The best.*] "το καλον, a hebraism for το καλλιστον." Wakefield.

[6] *Abstain,* &c.] With Dr. Chandler, I connect this advice with the preceding. The word ειδος signifies *sort* or *kind,* as well as *appearance.* "*q. d.* have nothing to do with such kind of prophecies as, after examination, do not appear to proceed from the spirit of God."

true whatever any teacher may advance without due and diligent examination. No, my brethren, there is much error and false doctrine abroad, which assumes to be the doctrine of Christ. You must act like cautious dealers in the precious metals; you must learn, like them, to examine and to weigh; to distinguish counterfeit from sterling gold; rejecting what is spurious, and retaining, holding fast, and treasuring up, only that which is pure and genuine. But as to that doctrine which will not bear the process of trial, whatever pretensions it may make to the character of sound and evangelical Christianity, after due examination, reject it without hesitation, as worthless dross. Ch. V. Ver. 22.

5. The apostle prays that God would preserve and complete the virtues of their character, ver. 23, 24.

And may the God of peace[1] *himself sanctify* 23.

[1] *The God of peace.*] This expression, in comparison with 1 Cor. xiv. 33, seems to imply that some confusion and altercation had already taken place in the church at Thessalonica, in consequence of a competition and rivalship of spiritual gifts, which the apostle was desirous to suppress. Dr. Chandler considers the same subject as continued from ver. 19—23: viz. "'Quench not the spirit:' improve and exercise his gifts. 'Despise not prophesyings:' neither undervalue the gift, nor those who possess it. 'Prove all things:' bring all prophesyings to the test. 'Hold fast that which is good:' such as appear worthy of the spirit embrace and adhere to. 'Abstain from all appearance of evil:' what is not consistent with truth and holiness reject. And that you may do all this with temperance and candour, may God himself, who is the God of peace, who loves, approves, and commands it, sanctify you wholly, keep you pure and unmixed from the disorders and vices of the

Ch. V. Ver. 23. *you entirely. And may your entire* person [1], *the spirit, and the soul, and the body, be preserved unblameable unto the coming of our Lord Jesus* 24. *Christ. Faithful* is *he who invited you, and he will perform* his promise [2].

For the credit of the gospel, and for your own credit and improvement, I am anxious that you should live in peace; that there may be no unpleasant rivalry or jealousy with respect to your spiritual gifts; and that your examination of doctrines may not be a source of personal animosity. And to this end, may that God, who is the author of the gospel of peace and the lover of concord, preserve you entirely in this, as in other instances, from the contamination of the unbelieving world. And O that every one of you might, in every respect, both as to

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world; a peculiar separate people, devoted to his service and worship."

[1] *Your entire* person.] See Chandler's note. The apostle here alludes to the philosophy of the Stoics, Platonists, and others, who represented man as consisting of three distinct parts: the spirit, or rational mind; the sensitive soul, the seat of the affections; and the body, the mansion of both. It is universally allowed that the apostle does not, in this passage, mean to countenance, much less authoritatively to teach, the philosophy to which he here alludes. The same principle is applicable to other similar cases, *v. g.* to the doctrine of an intermediate state, and to those of apparitions and of demoniacal possessions, which were probably borrowed from the oriental philosophy. The apostles and evangelists were plain men, who were authorized to teach the plain doctrine of a future life, and a judgement to come; but who were not inspired to settle any nice questions in metaphysics or philosophy. See Benson *in loc.*

[2] His promise.] So the ellipsis is supplied by Mr. Wakefield: "He who called you may be relied on for the performance of his promise."

mind and body, in thought, in inclination, and in outward action, be preserved perfectly innocent, and pure, to that day when you will be summoned to the tribunal of our common Master, Lord, and Judge! And be assured, my brethren, that the merciful God, who invited you to participate in the invaluable blessings of the gospel, will prove faithful to every promise that he has made. Be you true to yourselves and to your profession, and you need not doubt that your best wishes will be fulfilled, and your highest expectations will be exceeded. Ch. V. Ver. 24.

6. The apostle requests an interest in their prayers; he sends his affectionate salutations; he requires the epistle to be publicly read, and concludes with a solemn benediction, ver. 25—28.

Brethren, pray for us. 25.

My Christian brethren, those of you especially who are engaged in the work of public instruction, and who can, therefore, sympathize with us in our labours, our difficulties, and our perils, pray for us; that we may be duly qualified for our work, and successful in it; and that we may be delivered from the malice of unreasonable and wicked men. To know that we are the object of your prayers will be a source of comfort and encouragement to us.

Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss[3]. 26.

[3] *A holy kiss.*] This was an ancient eastern custom, Gen. xxvii. 26, Prov. xxiv. 26. In the Jewish synagogues the men and women had seats in different parts of the synagogue; and

Ch. V. Ver. 26. Assure my Christian brethren of my affectionate salutations and cordial good wishes for them.

27. *I adjure you by the Lord*[1], *that this epistle be read to all*[2] *the holy brethren.*

This epistle, though addressed to the whole church at Thessalonica, will of course be delivered into the hands of you, my brethren, who are the

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this custom was adopted by Christians in their places of worship. See Benson on 1 Pet. v. 14.

[1] *I adjure you.*] Ὁρκίζω ὑμας· *I lay you under the solemn obligation of an oath.* There were two forms of taking an oath among the Jews: when a man pronounced the oath himself, and when he was adjured by another. In all cases an execration was supposed to attend the oath. Our Lord answered upon oath before the high-priest. And the example of the apostle in this instance shows that oaths are not unlawful upon solemn occasions. Matt. xxvi. 63. See Benson and Whitby. Beza supposes this and the two preceding verses to have been addressed to the elders of the church. "προεσγωσι, *sive presbyteris primum epistola in manus tradebatur. His salutem cæteris Christianis dicendam injungit apostolus, eosque monet, ne sibi solis epistolam servent, sed cum reliquis de plebe Christianis, prælegendo communicent.*" Rosenmuller.

[2] *Be read to all.*] Dr. Benson remarks, that "the epistle was to be read publicly to all the church. St. Paul was not for having the scriptures locked up from the common people; neither did he recommend it to them, before they read the scriptures, first to read a system of divinity drawn up by uninspired and fallible men." "St. Paul, by adjuring them in so solemn a manner to read this epistle, might perhaps design to introduce the reading of his epistles into the Christian churches. They would thereby be led to regard them as the rule of their faith and practice as Christians." "How easy was it," adds this learned expositor, "for the primitive Christians to distinguish Paul's genuine epistles from any counterfeit ones? when he sent them to the several churches by trusty and well known persons? when he ordered them to be read publicly upon the receipt of them? when he wrote them with his own hand, or took care to affix the salutation written with his own hand? And if the genuineness of them was once ascertained, how easy was it to transmit them to posterity!"

superintendants of the church; and, as it contains some things which may possibly give offence to some professed believers, you may perhaps be unwilling to incur the odium of communicating it to the society. But to save you from that difficulty, I now enjoin it as a solemn charge, and require you, as you will be responsible for your conduct to our Lord and Master at his final appearance, that you do cause this letter to be publicly produced and read when every member of the society is present; that all may hear, and that each may apply the admonitions and precepts to his own case; and so that all may be instructed, warned, and edified. Ch. V. Ver. 27.

The favour of our Lord Jesus Christ[3] be *with you. Amen.* 28.

I conclude with expressing my earnest desire and prayer for you all, that you may all participate in the everlasting blessings of that gospel which is the free gift of God by Jesus Christ; and that you may be numbered amongst the faithful friends and followers of our great Master at his second coming. Amen.

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[3] *The favour*, &c.] "The original word signifies both *favour* and the effect of it; the apostle doubtless included both." Chandler.

THE SECOND EPISTLE

OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE THESSALONIANS.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THE apostle in his first epistle to the Thessalonians had expressed himself so strongly concerning the second coming of Christ, the near approach of the day of judgement, and the serious interest both of himself and them in this awful event, that he seems to have excited a very general expectation in the minds of the Thessalonian Christians, of the immediate arrival of that solemn event; which excited great consternation and alarm. This alarm having been reported to the apostle, perhaps by the person who was employed to carry the letter, he thought it necessary to write immediately to check their unfounded apprehensions. This letter, therefore, he wrote from Corinth, while Silas and Ti-

mothy were still with him; whose names he joins with his own in the introductory salutation: and it is generally agreed that this epistle was written A.D. 52.[1]

Of the genuineness of this epistle no doubt has ever yet been entertained. The original was authenticated by the concluding salutation, which was written with the apostle's own hand. It is a public epistle, addressed to a considerable body of Christians, to whom no doubt it was publicly read, and by whom it would probably be preserved with great care. And though it is the shortest of Paul's public epistles, yet it contains several passages in which the apostle alludes to discourses which he had delivered when he was at Thessalonica, or to events which happened at the time: which allusions, though necessarily obscure to a modern reader, would be well understood by the persons to whom the epistle is addressed, and would never

[1] Grotius is singular in supposing that this epistle was written previously to the former, that it was dated in the second year of Caligula, about A.D. 39, in whose extravagance and impiety the prophecies of the second chapter were fulfilled, according to Grotius's interpretation, who was very unwilling to allow that any of the predictions in the New Testament received their accomplishment in papal Rome. He supposes the epistle to have been addressed to a small number of believing Hebrews who escaped from the persecution which followed Stephen's martyrdom, and who settled at Thessalonica. But he conjectures that the epistle was not sent till the reign of Vespasian. His arguments are trifling in the extreme; one is, that ch. iii. 17, he notes the manner of identifying his epistle: ch. ii. 13, he speaks of them as chosen to salvation from the beginning. The probability is, that this great man was influenced by his hypothesis more than he was himself aware.

have occurred to one who had attempted to forge an epistle in the apostle's name. Also the language and sentiments of the epistle harmonize with the apostle's character and professions as represented in Luke's history, or in the other acknowledged writings of Paul[2]. Finally, this epistle is inserted in all the ancient catalogues of undisputed canonical books; it is found in all the best and most ancient manuscripts without exception, and in all versions; and it has been received and cited from age to age without dispute as the genuine production of the apostle Paul.

A more decisive proof, perhaps, of the genuineness of this epistle is the prophecy which it contains of the man of sin, chap. ii., so palpably fulfilled in the corruptions and usurpations of the antichristian church, and particularly in papal Rome.

It has been doubted whether the mistake of the Thessalonians originated in their misunderstanding the apostle's first letter, or whether some person had not forged a letter in the apostle's name, which he here disavows. The former supposition is probably the true one. No person who reads the first epistle to the Thessalonians can be surprised that the

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[2] See Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. x. The ingenious writer argues from the apostle's referring to his conversations with the Thessalonians for an explanation of the language of his letter, ch. ii. 5; from his refusal to accept a subsistence from the Thessalonians, and maintaining himself by his own labour, ch. iii. 8 (comp. Phil. iv. 15, Acts xx. 34); and from his correction of the mistake made by the Thessalonians of the annunciation of Christ's appearance in the first epistle.

Christians to whom it was written should expect the speedy advent of Christ to judgement: though certainly the apostle gave no room for the expectation which they seem to have taken up, that this event would arrive in less than a year.

It has been judiciously remarked, that as the apostle in this letter does not repeat his cautions against impurity, nor his exhortations to respect their spiritual superintendants, there is great reason to believe that the advice he suggested in his former epistle had in these cases produced its proper effect. But the hints which he had given to officious and idle persons who neglected their own concerns to intrude into those of other men, to the great discredit of their Christian profession, not having been properly regarded by them, he animadverts upon them in the second letter with greater severity.

THE APOSTLE INTRODUCES the epistle with his usual evangelical salutation, joining the names of Silas and Timothy with his own, Ch. i. 1, 2. He then,

FIRST, Thanks God for the constancy and fortitude with which they suffered persecution; and comforts them with the assured expectation of the appearance of Christ to reward their fidelity, and to punish their enemies and persecutors; and prays that God would enable them to persevere to the end in their adherence to the gospel, ver. 3—12.

SECONDLY, He corrects the error into which they had fallen concerning the coming of Christ: He

denies that he himself, or any person authorized by him, had ever declared that this event would take place immediately: He assures them that previously to this event a great and general apostasy would take place, the characters of which he particularly describes; but that even this apostasy would not happen till some great obstruction was removed. Ch. ii. 1—12.

THIRDLY, The apostle expresses his gratitude for their election to gospel privileges, and his hope that they will, by the grace of God, be preserved from the apostasy. He requests that they would pray for his success, and for his deliverance from persecution; and expresses his confidence that they will comply with his advice, and persevere in faith and virtue. Ch. ii. 13—iii. 5.

FOURTHLY, He enters a strong protest against the character and behaviour of those impertinent, idle, and disorderly persons who infested the church at Thessalonica, and disgraced the Christian profession. He earnestly admonishes such persons to reform their conduct; and he exhorts the rest to mark and shun the society of those who are incorrigible by other means, that they may be brought to shame and repentance, ver. 6—15.

FIFTHLY, The epistle concludes with the salutation and benediction written with the apostle's own hand, ver. 16—18.

"The sum of what has been said," says Dr. Benson, "comes to this: viz. That this epistle may be

looked upon as a supplement to the former; that the main point about which he wrote this second epistle was to rectify a mistake into which they had fallen concerning the speedy coming of Christ. But he has also added many other things of considerable importance: comforting the Thessalonians under their persecutions, and reprehending the idle and disorderly among them. These three things the apostle hath more especially laboured, that he might prevent the ruin or great decay of the Christian religion at Thessalonica. And it is to be hoped that he succeeded in his design. For we find from the *fathers* that there was a Christian church at Thessalonica many ages after this."

THE SECOND EPISTLE

TO

THE THESSALONIANS.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE, after a suitable introduction, gives thanks to God for the increase of their faith and love, and for their fortitude under persecution; he encourages them with the assurance of an ample recompense at the appearance of Christ, and concludes with affectionately commending them to the powerful protection of God. Ch. i. throughout. Ch. I.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

THE apostle introduces his epistle with the usual salutation, joining the names of Silas and Timothy with his own, ver. 1, 2.

PAUL and Silvanus, and Timothy[1], *to the* Ver. 1.

[1] *Paul,* &c.] The opening salutation is the same with that

Ch. I. Ver. 2. *church of the Thessalonians*, believers *in God our Father, and* our *Lord Jesus Christ: Favour be unto you, and peace from God our Father*[1], *and* from our *Lord Jesus Christ.*

We, who lately addressed an epistle to the church at Thessalonica, even I, Paul, with my associates Silas and Timothy, now unite in writing a second epistle to the body of Christians in that opulent and populous city; to those who distinguish themselves from heathen idolaters on the one hand, and from prejudiced Jews on the other, by believing in the unity and paternal love of God, and by a professed subjection to Jesus of Nazareth as their Master, and acknowledgement of him as the true Messiah. And as a testimony of our affection for them, we repeat our earnest wish that they may enjoy an abundant participation of the blessings of the gospel, which is, through Jesus Christ, the best gift of God to man.

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of the former epistle, which, as Dr. Benson observes, may be regarded as a presumptive argument that the two epistles were written by the same person.

[1] *God our Father.*] "It cannot but be observed," says Dr. Priestley, "that, in the usual tenor of scripture language, God and Christ are carefully distinguished; the appellation of God being given to the Father only, exclusively of Christ, as well as of all other beings."

Dr. Benson very pertinently observes, that "when the apostle says εν Θεω—και Κυριω, *in God our Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ*, it plainly shows that St. Paul did not design to say, ver. 2, 'God the Father of us and of the Lord Jesus Christ;' though our Lord did use an expression like that, John xx. 17. In this text, and in 1 Thess. i. 1, εν is to be understood before Κυριω, and απο before Κυριε. See 2 Thess. ii. 16; 1 Tim. ii. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2."

1. The apostle thanks God for their increasing faith and love, and for their fortitude under those severe persecutions, the existence of which was a decisive proof of a future retribution, ver. 3—5. Ch. I.

We ought to thank God[2] *always concerning you, brethren, as it is fit; because your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all toward each other is increasing.* Ver. 3.

The report which we have received of your character and conduct since we wrote our last epistle fills us with joy and gratitude. And as we have been accustomed in our daily exercises of social worship to give thanks to God for your profession of the Christian faith, and your exercise of Christian love, it is now our duty to express our gratitude for that distinguished improvement which you have made in these fundamental principles of Christian virtue, of which we have heard so favourable an account.

So that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God, on account of your patience and fidelity under all the persecutions and afflictions which ye endure; which are *a proof*[3] *of the right-* 4. 5.

[2] *We ought to thank God,* &c.] "In the former epistle the apostle thanked God for the beginnings of their faith, love, and patience, 1 Thess. i. 3, 6—10, ii. 14, iv. 9, 10; in this and the following verses he mentions their increase in these virtues. This is another confirmation of this being a second epistle to the Thessalonians." Benson. It seems not unlikely that the messenger by whom the former letter had been sent had brought back to the apostle a favourable account of the improving character of the Thessalonian converts.

[3] *A proof,* &c.] "ενδειγμα, *argumentum firmum unde colligi*

Ch. 1. Ver. 5. *eous judgement of God, that ye may be accounted worthy*[1] *of that kingdom of God*[2], *for which ye even suffer.*

With much regret we hear that the cruelty of your persecutors does not yet relent. But having been also informed of the fortitude with which you undergo the severest sufferings, and of your faithful adherence, notwithstanding, to the profession and to the promises of the gospel, we cannot but con-

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tuto possit, aliquando Deum gravissimas pœnas, ab adversariis religionis Christianæ sumpturum, et Christianos oppressos felicitatis æternæ, præmio ornaturum esse." Schleusner. "ενδειγμα, αποδειξις." Hesychius. "I know of no stronger proof," says Dr. Benson, "of a righteous judgement to come, than the persecutions of good men, and the present triumphs of the wicked."

[1] *Accounted worthy.*] "καταξιωθηναι, *dignum habeo, dignum reddo, nancisci aliquid, consequi, ut consequamini felicitatem æternam.*" Schleusner. "A proof of the just appointment of God in vouchsafing to you that kingdom of God." Wakefield. "*Counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which ye suffer.* The sufferings you endure, you bear on account of it; animated by the hope of attaining it, and because you will not renounce your inheritance of it: and hereby God will manifest his own righteousness, and demonstrate the equity of his procedure in your being accounted worthy to be made possessors of it. For what can be a greater instance of equity in God, than that, as they bore their sufferings with constancy, he should reward their patience and fidelity, and approve himself faithful to his own engagements, by conferring the promised kingdom upon them?" Chandler.

In short, their worthiness consisted not in possessing a merit which might claim the reward as a *right*; but in acquiring those qualifications to which the promise was annexed.

[2] *Kingdom of God.*] "Not the 'Christian church,' but the 'state of future happiness intended for virtuous believers.' The profession of the faith and hope of the gospel was the reason, both why their enemies persecuted them, and of their own amazing patience." See Benson.

gratulate you upon your heroic conduct; and we are continually boasting of you wherever we go, and holding up your example to other Christians, for their encouragement under similar trials. And be assured, my brethren, that such sufferings as yours, borne with such a temper and in such a cause, cannot fail of their proper recompense. They are themselves a proper proof of a future judgement under the righteous government of God; and are preparing you for a glorious station in that blessed and immortal state, the lively expectation of which supports you under all your sufferings. Ch. I. Ver. 5.

2. God himself regards it as an act of justice, that sufferers should be rewarded, and persecutors punished; and it is his will that this awful distinction should take place at the final appearance of Jesus Christ, ver. 6—10.

Forasmuch as it is *just in the account of God*[3] *to recompense affliction to those who afflict you, but to you who are afflicted rest with us*[4], *when the Lord Jesus shall be manifested from heaven*[5]. 6. 7.

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[3] *Forasmuch as* it is *just.*] "ειπερ is not a note of doubting but of confirmation. See Rom. viii. 9." Benson. "Forasmuch as it is a righteous thing with God; *i. e.* in his judgement and estimation." Chandler.

[4] *Rest with us.*] *i. e.* "the apostles and preachers of Christ." Chandler; who observes, that "the word we render *rest* sometimes signifies 'exemption from labour and hazard,' particularly of war; sometimes, 'remission from hard usage;' sometimes, 'the cheerful indulgence which is the effect of liberty:' *q. d.* being partakers with us in Christ's sufferings, you shall be partakers with us of his glory."

[5] *When the Lord Jesus,* &c.] "that is," says Dr. Chandler,

Ch. I. Ver. 7. And I can assure you, my brethren, from the highest authority, that we are not deceived in the conclusions we draw from the persecutions of the virtuous and faithful, that there is a judgement to come. For the righteous God himself regards it as an equitable thing, and as that which the honour of his government requires, to protect the innocent sufferer, and to inflict a just retaliation upon their cruel persecutors. And the gospel revelation teaches us when this awful distinction shall take place.

" when he shall leave for a season those heavenly mansions in which he now resides." " Jesus is now," says Dr. Benson, " in the third heavens, hid from mortal eyes." That there is some place in which Jesus now resides invisible to men, is an undoubted fact; and that this place may be called *heaven*, if by heaven be meant a state of honour, activity, and happiness, is equally indubitable. But that there is any such place above the clouds which corresponds with the popular notion of heaven, where God manifests his peculiar glory, and where Jesus dwells at an inconceivable distance from this world and from all human concerns, is highly improbable; it is contrary to every correct idea of the structure of the universe, and is altogether destitute of proof. The apostles express themselves upon the subject according to the popular notions of the Jews; but they never profess that they were authorized to give a *sanction* to those notions, which were crude and unphilosophical in the extreme. The apostle Paul probably knew nothing more and meant nothing more than that, as Christ had ascended into the atmosphere, into the region of the clouds, and had there disappeared, Acts i. 9; so, at his last coming, he will again appear in the clouds, from whence he will descend to the seat of judgement. But as to his present local residence, as he knew nothing, so he says nothing about it. Dr. Priestley well observes, that " we see here, as in the former epistle, that these persecuted Christians are referred for their reward to the second coming of Christ to raise the dead and to judge the world. No hint is given them of any recompense between the time of death and the resurrection, which the apostle could never have overlooked if he had known of any such state."

Your oppressors shall be punished; and you, together with us, who, like you, are exposed to continual persecution for the sake of Christ, shall enter upon your final and everlasting reward, on that day, when Jesus, our exalted chief, will appear again in the clouds of heaven. Ch. I. Ver. 7.

With the angels of his might, in flaming fire[1], *executing vengeance on those who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*[2]. *These shall suffer punishment,* even *everlasting destruction*[3], *from the presence of the Lord,* 8. 9.

[1] *Angels of his might, in flaming fire.*] Angels are any instruments, animate or inanimate, by which divine Providence executes its purposes. *Maim. de More Nevochim,* part. ii. c. 6. 42. The apostle uses these expressions perhaps in allusion to the appearance upon Mount Sinai, to heighten the ideas of his readers with respect to the solemnity and grandeur of the scene. How far they are to be understood literally, the event only can explain, and it would be fruitless to inquire.

[2] *Who know not,* &c.] Dr. Benson thinks, that "by 'those who know not God,' the apostle means *heathen persecutors;* and by 'those who obey not the gospel,' *Jews.*" He adds, "There is no doubt but Christ will at last punish professed Christians who have not obeyed the gospel, as well as infidels; but I do not apprehend that that is said here." The word Χριστῶ is omitted in some of the most ancient manuscripts and versions.

[3] *These shall suffer punishment,* even *everlasting destruction.*] Dr. Priestley observes, "that these terms, literally interpreted, would imply that the wicked are to be finally destroyed. But the term *destruction* is often used in scripture to denote calamity in general, and such as has its period; and if the wicked be raised from the dead and continue to exist, it is not possible, unless the constitution of their natures be entirely changed, but that their sufferings will in length of time work a favourable change in the state of their minds, so that after an adequate punishment their sufferings may be remitted." Dr. Chandler says, "The word ὀλεθρος never implies an entire extinction of the thinking principle; but that in this connexion it expresses

Ch. I. Ver. 10. *and from the glory of his power*[1], *when he shall come in that day to be glorified by his saints, and to be admired by all those who have believed, and* by you particularly[2], *because our testimony among you hath been believed.*

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the entire extinction of that life which they receive at the resurrection by the reunion of the soul and body." "This destruction," says he, "this second death, shall be final and irreversible." But what is to become of the thinking principle, the soul, after it has been thus finally separated from the resurrection body he does not say, nor how long its connexion with that body is to continue.

The apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 22, assures us, that all who die in Adam shall be made alive in Christ. But no one can doubt that the resurrection here announced is a resurrection to happiness: all mankind, therefore, will be raised to a life of ultimate happiness. But in the text we are told, that they will be punished with everlasting destruction; which, however, as Dr. Chandler well observes, does not signify extinction of being. To reconcile the apostle to himself, therefore, it must mean *a suffering that will end in happiness:* q. d. The wicked shall be punished till he ceases to be wicked, till wickedness is destroyed. Or, perhaps, till he himself is weary of existence: he shall seek for death and it shall flee from him.

[1] *From the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power:*] i. e. to an exclusion from his presence: or, this punishment will be inflicted by an act of the glorious power of Christ, who will then be visibly present.—"which destruction shall proceed from the Lord, and the fearful exertion of his glorious power." Newcome.

[2] *When he shall come in that day, and* by you particularly.] This is Dr. Benson's construction of this obscure passage, and it appears to me the most eligible. He observes, that the trajection of the words *in that day* is exactly similar to Rom. ii. 12, 16; also that supplying the ellipsis by the words *by you particularly*, saves the parenthesis and makes the sense clear Others, however, think this construction harsh and inadmissible.

The apostle declares that the wicked shall be punished at the same time when Christ shall be glorified and admired in and by all true believers, and consequently in and by the Thessalonians, who will then, and not before, be admitted to their final

Ch. I. Ver. 10.

He will then appear in the awful pomp of a sovereign and a judge, amidst lightnings and thunders, armed with divine power to execute the just judgements of God upon the enemies and persecutors of his church, whether heathen or Jews. These shall, in their turn, be dragged to the bar of eternal justice, and shall hear that sentence of condemnation passed upon themselves which they have been so eager to pass upon you. And this awful sentence to a punishment worse than death, the intensity and duration of which will be far beyond all thought and expectation, will most assuredly be executed upon them to its utmost extent, by their offended Judge, in the exertion of those great powers which will be communicated to him for that purpose. And in that tremendous day when he shall thus inflict vengeance upon persecutors, he shall be celebrated, with transports of joy and anthems of praise, by his chosen friends, for the faithful performance of all his promises; and the hearts of those who have believed in his doctrine shall exult with grateful admiration, when they see how far the displays both of his mercy and his justice exceed their highest ex-

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triumph. Grotius and Chandler take επιστευθη in the sense of πιστευθησεται· *q. d.* Because in that day our testimony concerning you shall be believed, or will be evidently confirmed. Believers will admire when they see the accomplishment of the divine word. One copy reads επιστωθη· this reading Mr. Wakefield approves, and renders the passage thus: "When he is come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired on that day by every believer of our testimony which was established among you by proof."—"*eo quod doctrina nostra vobis proposita certa reperietur illo die.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. I. Ver. 10. pectations. In this solemn and magnificent scene I rejoice to think that you, my friends, will bear an honourable and glorious part, because you gave credit to the doctrine which we taught you, and in circumstances of great difficulty and danger you have faithfully adhered to the profession of the gospel.

3. The apostle prays that God would enable them to carry into effect all their pious and benevolent purposes; by which they would do honour to the gospel, and promote the interest of Christianity in the world, ver. 11, 12.

11. *To which end we also pray for you always, that our God would make you worthy of this calling, that he would execute with power every kind pur-*
12. *pose of generosity*[1] *and work of faith, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified by you*[2] *and ye by him, according to the grace of our God, and of* our *Lord Jesus Christ.*

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[1] *Every kind purpose of generosity.*] Dr. Chandler observes, that "the word αγαθωσυνη, though several times used in the New Testament, is never applied to God, but always to men; and signifies the virtue of *beneficence*, or goodness of disposition. He therefore renders the passage thus: "that God would fulfill every kind intention of generosity." Mr. Wakefield's translation is, "that our God would make you worthy of this call, and fully execute with power every intention of goodness and work of faith."

[2] *That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified by you,* &c.] viz. "that when their enemies saw their exemplary charity, their fortitude and patience, &c. they might have a high veneration for him by whose name they were called, and be prevailed on to embrace his religion." Chandler.

The address of the apostle in this first part of his epistle appears to me to have escaped the notice of most expositors. The

Ch. I. Ver. 12.

And that you may not be disappointed of this glorious hope, it is the subject of our earnest and daily prayer for you, that God would in his great mercy increase and perfect your qualifications for that divine reward, to the expectation of which you are invited by the gospel. And we further pray that he will by his efficacious energy enable you to carry into complete effect all the kind and generous purposes of your hearts, and to produce those fruits of benevolence and good works which are the genuine result of a well-grounded faith in the Christian doctrine. Thus by your excellent example the Christian religion will be recommended to the notice, the esteem and love of your heathen neighbours; and in return you will yourselves derive unspeakable benefit and everlasting honour from the profession and practice of this divine religion: a recompense which indeed neither you nor we can claim upon the ground of merit and of right, but which is the free gift of the infinite mercy of God, abounding to

main design of the epistle is to correct the error of the Thessalonians, in supposing that the day of judgement was very near at hand. This error appears to have excited in their minds the greatest terror and alarm, and the correction of it would have a tendency to lead them to the contrary extreme of carelessness and security. To guard against this danger, the apostle states in the strongest language the certainty and solemnity of the event, and affectionately reminds them of their own interest in it. Archbishop Newcome has a similar remark: "This epistle," says he, "furnishes a remarkable instance of St. Paul's manner. The Thessalonians appear to have concluded that the day of judgement was approaching. The apostle wrote to correct that error; and he shows in this chapter how full his mind was of the subject, which he does not directly enter on till the beginning of the second chapter."

Ch. I. Ver. 12. true believers through Jesus Christ our Lord, whom he has constituted the messenger of his grace to a sinful world.

SECTION II.

Ch. II. *THE APOSTLE states and rectifies the error into which they had fallen concerning the immediate appearance of Christ to judgement; and foretells a great apostasy which would previously take place.* Ch. ii. 1—12.

1. The apostle cautions them against supposing that he had ever intended to affirm that the day of judgement was to take place immediately, ver. 1, 2.

Ver. 1. *Now we intreat you, brethren, concerning*[1] *the*
2. *appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our assembling unto him*[2], *that ye be not hastily shaken from your right mind*[3], *nor greatly alarmed*[4], *as*

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[1] *Concerning*, &c.] This is very generally allowed to be the proper interpretation of ὑπερ in this connexion, where it seems to be used for περι, which is indeed the reading of two manuscripts. See Griesbach.

[2] *Our assembling*, &c.] "our being raised from the dead to stand before his tribunal." Newcome. This is not exactly the idea: the Thessalonians expected the immediate appearance of Christ, and consequently that they should be summoned into his presence without dying.

[3] *Shaken from your right mind.*] Σαλευω is used of ships that are tossed by the waves: either "be not so agitated as to lose

though we by the spirit had taught or written[5] *that the day of the Lord is instantly coming*[6].

Ch. II. Ver. 2.

I am concerned to hear that you have by some means fallen into a very great mistake with respect to that most solemn and certain event, the public appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ to raise the dead, and to convene all the tribes, and every individual of mankind, to his tribunal, to receive their final and awful sentence from his lips; and that you expect this great event to happen in the course of a few months. I am further informed that it is reported among you that I am the author of this persuasion, and that it is in consequence of something which I have said, or written, under the immediate influence of inspiration, that this alarming expectation has been excited. It is by no means

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the quiet possession of your minds, or to be moved from the true sense of my words in a former letter." Chandler.

[4] *Greatly alarmed.*] Θροεισθαι, *to speak, to sound, to be struck with terror.* Hesychius.—" *strepitu percellor, ac perterrefio, a* Θρυος, *clamor tumultuantium.*" Schleusner. " It expresses surprise and trouble at the report of disagreeable news. Matt. xxiv. 6, Mark xiii. 7." Chandler.

[5] *As though we by the spirit had taught or written.*] Literally, *neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us. Spirit* is often used for *inspiration,* 1 John iv. 1, 6. This was the report which alarmed them, that the apostle by inspiration had declared or written, &c.

[6] *That the day of the Lord is instantly coming.*] The best copies read *Lord* for *Christ:* see Griesbach. *Will come instantly:* " ενεστηκεν, *quasi instet dies Christi: nempe hoc anno: instare dicitur quod jam præsens est.* Rom. viii. 38; 1 Cor. iii. 22, vii. 26; Gal. i. 4; Heb. ix. 9." Grotius. " that the day was now instantly coming." Chandler. " They might possibly apprehend that Christ would come in a few months, weeks, or days; and it was of very great moment to rectify that mistake." Benson.

Ch. II. Ver. 2. surprising that such intelligence should have excited in your minds the utmost consternation. But I intreat you, my brethren, to calm your spirits; for I solemnly assure you, that how firmly soever I may believe, and how earnestly soever I may desire to inculcate, the certainty, the solemnity, and the speedy approach of the appearance of Christ, and whatever strong expressions I may have used in my last epistle, which you may have interpreted in too literal a sense, or whatever reports may have been circulated by others concerning me, I never did declare, or believe, that this great day was so near at hand as you now apprehend.

2. He assures them that a remarkable apostasy would first take place, the characteristic symptoms of which he particularly describes, ver. 3, 4.

3. *Let no one deceive you*[1] *by any means; for the apostasy must first come*[2], *and the man of sin*[3] *be*

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[1] *Let no one deceive you.*] It is possible that the error of the Thessalonians might have originated in a misconception of the apostle's own strong language in his first epistle, ch. iv. 15, v. 2—4; and that rumours once propagated might be exaggerated without any intention to deceive. But the advice here, connected with the particular direction at the close of the epistle, ch. iii. 17, how to distinguish a genuine from a spurious letter, may perhaps justify the suspicion that some one had forged an epistle in the apostle's name. See Benson.

[2] *The apostasy must first come.*] See Mr. Wakefield. The expression in the original is elliptical: ὁτι εαν μη ελθῃ ἡ αποστασια πρωτον. "For, *that day will not come*, unless there come a falling away first." So Archbishop Newcome. *The* apostasy. The article seems to imply that it was an event which he had mentioned to the Thessalonians before, ver. 5. "The word signifies," says Chandler, "'a hostile separation

revealed, that son of perdition who setteth himself in opposition to, and exalteth himself above, every Ch. II. Ver. 4.

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of one part of a nation from another,' 'rebellion against a prince,' or, 'a mutinous revolt of soldiers against their general.' In this place it apparently means a revolt from God." Rosenmuller, in his notes upon this chapter, after having stated the opinion of Hammond, who considered Gnosticism as the great *apostasy*, and Simon Magus as the *man of sin*—of Schoetgenius, who understood the revolt of the Jews as the *apostasy*, and the pharisees and rabbis who provoked the revolt as the *man of sin*—of Grotius, who believed Caligula to be the *man of sin*, and the wickedness and impiety of his reign to be the *apostasy*—of Wetstein, who interprets the *apostasy*, of the civil wars of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, and the *man of sin*, of Titus Vespasian, and the Flavian family—and of Koppe, who supposes that the apostle alludes to Dan. xi. 36, and to prophecies then current of calamities which should precede the reign of the Messiah, declares his own judgement to be in favour of Noesseltus, who interprets the *day of the Lord*, as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, the *apostasy*, to the revolt of the Jews, and the *man of sin*, to the false prophets and Messiahs, who urged them on to revolt; and particularly to the *zealots*, of whose impieties and cruelties during the siege of Jerusalem, Josephus has given so affecting a description. And he supposes that he who *restrained* the *apostasy*, was Claudius, during whose reign the Jews remained quiet. This whole doctrine it is believed that the apostle learned from the prophecy of Christ in the evangelists. That the apostle alluded to Christ's more awful appearance to judge the world, this critic does not deny; especially as it appears that our Lord's prophecy in Matthew terminates with a description of the final judgement. But he makes no distinction between the two events in this passage, either because the Thessalonians did not distinguish them, or that he himself confounded them. "*Conjungit Paulus mentionem utriusque adventus sive quod sciret utrumque a Judæis, quales fuerunt Thessalonicenses, nullo modo discerni, sed unum in tempus conjici, sive quod ipse tempus nesciret.*"

The great objection to this hypothesis is, Why need the Thessalonians give themselves so much concern about the revolt of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem? He answers, that all their trouble and persecution came from the Jews: "*habebatque maximam vim ad animos Thessalonicensium Christianorum tranquillandos denunciatio, fore ut Romani Ju-*

Ch. II. Ver. 4. *one that is entitled divine or august*[1], *so that he placeth himself in the temple of God, exhibiting himself as a god*[2].

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dæorum furore lacessiti horum seditionem ulciscerentur, contra Christiani, labefactata Judæorum impotentia liberarentur a perpetuâ Judæorum vexatione."

But why then regard this event with terror rather than exultation? The answer to this will hardly be deemed satisfactory: "*quum id quod inopinatum accidat, celeriterque opprimat animum, terribile videri soleat.*" The suddenness of the event, however desirable, excited consternation. The words διὰ πνεύματος, ver. 2, Noesseltus and Rosenmuller refer to our Lord's prophecy, Matt. xxiv.

[1] *The man of sin.*] Dr. Benson, in his admirable *Dissertation upon the Man of Sin*, has stated and well confuted various interpretations which have been given to this prophecy, and in common with most protestant expositors, he explains it *of the papal power*. His arguments are irrefragable as far as they go. But I agree with Mr. Evanson, in his Letter to the Bishop of Worcester, that the antichristian power is by no means limited to the church of Rome, but that it extends to all civil establishments of a corrupt Christianity, of which the papal power forms only one, though a very conspicuous, feature. The eastern as well as the western, the protestant as well as the popish churches, are included in this comprehensive symbol; and, if I am not mistaken, it will easily appear to an attentive observer, how much more correctly and literally the prophecy is accomplished when applied to this object, and explained upon this large scale, than upon any other interpretation. *The man of sin*: "one who was to commit all sort of wickedness himself, and to lead others into sin." So Dr. Chandler, from a Greek commentator, which is the sense adopted by almost all expositors; but I conceive without sufficient reason. In the language of the New Testament, *sin* signifies *heathenism*; and *sinners* are *heathen idolaters*. *Publicans* and *sinners* are *tax-gatherers* and *heathen*. The woman who washed and anointed our Lord's feet was a *sinner*, Luke vii. 37: *i. e.* probably a notorious idolater. See Gal. ii. 15, "*sinners* of the Gentiles." The words *man of sin*, therefore, are probably intended to express that the apostate church would be an idolatrous power.

"There have been various interpretations," says Dr. Priestley, "of this famous prophecy; but I cannot help thinking that the application of it to those corruptions of Christianity

Let no person mislead you intentionally, or otherwise, by pretending to any authority from me to contradict the doctrine which I plainly taught you from the first. For I now repeat the assurance which I then gave you, that near and certain as the appearance of our Lord is, it will be preceded by another very remarkable event: a general and al- Ch. II. Ver. 4.

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that we call *popish*, and to that astonishing usurpation of power by the bishops of Rome, is by much the most easy and natural. That the apostles had an historical knowledge of the fulfilment of this prophecy, is not probable. The real use of prophecy respects those who see the accomplishment of it."

[1] *Who exalteth himself above every one entitled divine or august.*] Θεον η σεβασμα, *god* or *emperor*. " Σεβασμα, omnem rem sacram, quæ sanctè et cum religione colitur, *significat*, 2 Thess. ii. 4. *Deorum omnium, omnisque divini cultus, superbus contemtor, ut Koppius recte transtulit. Quem Wetstenius* (*N. T. T.* ii. p. 310.) *Titum, sive domum Flaviam, non autem ut aliis visum est Pontificem Romanum, aut Caium, aut Simonem Magum, esse arbitratur.*" Schleusner.

Civil magistrates are called *gods*; *august*, σεβασμα, alludes to the title of the Roman emperor, Acts xxv. 25. It means that the antichristian power should set up itself as a rival to, and even claim superiority over, the civil power, not even excepting that of the emperor himself. A fact sufficiently notorious in the history of mankind.

[2] *So that he placeth himself in the temple of God.*] The received text reads, " he places himself *as God*; but the words ως θεον, *as a God*, are not found in the most ancient manuscripts and versions, and are properly omitted by Griesbach and Newcome. The *temple of God* is the *Christian church*, 1 Cor. iii. 9, 16, 17; 1 Tim. iii. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 5; Rev. iii. 12. Such was the interpretation of the ancient Christian writers. See Benson. *Exhibiting himself as God: i. e.* though professing to be an ecclesiastical power, he usurps and exercises civil authority. " The word καθισαι," says Chandler, " should have been translated *he seateth* or *placeth himself*; it denotes insolent and violent intrusion. And the word that we render *show*, should have been translated *publicly declaring himself that he is a God*, contrary to all law, reason, and truth."

Ch. II. Ver. 4. most total apostasy from the purity of the Christian faith, and from the meekness and humility of the Christian spirit. Little as you may expect it, a formidable idolatrous power will make its appearance; which, after having proved the ruin of multitudes, will itself in the end be totally exterminated. This singular power will set itself in violent opposition to, and will upon every occasion exalt itself above, the civil, and even the imperial authority. And in the temple of the true God, in the Christian church itself, in which none but spiritual authority, the authority of reason and revelation, ought ever to be exercised, this wicked demon will insolently intrude itself, usurping and openly and avowedly exercising civil authority, for purposes the most unjust and oppressive.

3. The apostle reminds them that he had communicated this information to them before he left them, and that he had likewise told them by what circumstances the immediate appearance of this apostasy was prevented, ver. 5—7.

5. *Remember ye not, that whilst I was yet with you I told you these things?*

Do you not recollect, that while I was personally labouring among you, I plainly stated all these things upon divine authority? and could you suppose it possible that I should now teach a different doctrine?

6. *And ye know what restraineth now*[1], *that he*

[1] *Ye know what restraineth now.*] The apostle means the *Roman power.* This he had explained to the Thessalonians when

may not be revealed till his proper time[2]. *For the mystery of iniquity is already inwardly working*[3], *only till he who now restraineth it shall be removed out of the way*[4]. Ch. II. Ver. 7.

And if you recollect yourselves, you will remember that I told you what that other power now existing is which prevents the immediate appearance of this antichristian power, and keeps it back till the time destined for the public manifestation of it. For, to say the truth, much of this corrupt and overbearing spirit already exists in the church, but at present it works privately, and is kept under restraint; and so it will continue to be, till the abolition of that power which at present keeps it in check.

4. The apostle mentions some further particu-

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he was with them. At present he only hints at it; that he may not lay himself open to the charge of disloyalty and disaffection to the Roman government. See Newcome. "This," says Dr. Benson, "was the opinion of all the ancient commentators both Greek and Latin."

[2] *That he may not*, &c.] "Literally, 'to the end that he may be revealed in,' &c." Newcome.

[3] *Is already inwardly working.*] So Macknight. Even in the apostolic age the Christian doctrine began to be corrupted by the Gnostics and Docetæ, and an ambitious spirit began to show itself very early; but it was, in a great measure, kept under, while Rome was under heathen emperors.

[4] *Only till he*, &c.] So Dr. Chandler; who maintains that there is no ellipsis. Mr. Wakefield's version is, "but he who now hindereth must be removed, and then," &c. Chrysostom says, When the Roman empire shall be taken away, then shall the *man of sin* come; when that shall be overthrown, he shall invade the vacant seat, and attempt the empire both of man and God." Benson.

Ch. II. lars concerning the character, the progress, and the termination of the apostate power, ver. 8—10.

Ver. 8. *And then shall that lawless one be revealed*[1], *whom the Lord Jesus will consume with the breath of his mouth, and will disable with the manifestation of his presence*[2].

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[1] *That lawless one,* &c.] ὁ ἀνομος. "who sets himself up above all laws, human and divine." Chandler. Grotius, who interprets the *man of sin,* of the emperor Caligula, understands the person here predicted of Simon Magus. He is singular in his opinion. Expositors almost universally regard the whole description as relating to one and the same object, the antichristian power. Protestant interpreters commonly apply the description to the church of Rome; but it is more applicable to the establishment of a *a corrupt and persecuting Christianity* by the civil power, in the reign of Constantine the Great. This took place, agreeably to the language of the prophecy, immediately upon the downfall of the Pagan empire, whereas popery, properly so called, did not commence till some centuries afterwards, as protestants themselves allow. And why, indeed, should one apostasy be foretold rather than another? why the corrupt, persecuting, idolatrous establishments of the West, rather than those of the East? Aye, why the apostate, usurping, oppressive Catholic, rather than the apostate, persecuting, Protestant church, of every description, almost without exception? for all, when in power, have been equally intolerant; all have made themselves drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; all have bound upon the necks of those whom Christ made free, an iron yoke grievous to be borne; all have enforced their respective creeds by pains and penalties; all have propped up their disjointed fabrics by fraud and falsehood, by fine and imprisonment, by torments and death; and if Popery has slain its ten thousands, Protestantism may at least boast of having slain its thousands.

Wherever, therefore, a church professing Christianity exists, wielding the power of the state to establish and support its own corrupt, unscriptural, and idolatrous system, there is a limb of the great *apostasy;* there, in the temple of God, sits the *man of sin,* exalting himself above all that is called God's, whose coming is according to the operation of Satan, and whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and consume with the brightness of his appearance.

When this restraining power shall be overthrown, then, as I before told you, that apostate power which will act in opposition to the laws both of God and man, will immediately discover itself. But be assured, that whatever character it may affect, or whatever tyranny it may exercise, its duration shall be limited. It may prevail to a degree of enormity beyond what could possibly have been expected, but error, idolatry, and violence, shall gradually recede before the progressive influence of the doctrine of Christ, and this formidable phantom shall vanish and disappear before the glorious and irresistible

Ch. II. Ver. 8.

[2] *Whom the Lord Jesus will consume,* &c.] The word *Jesus* is inserted by Griesbach upon the best authorities. αναλωσει " This word," says Dr. Chandler, " is generally used of a gradual consumption : viz. ' the waste of time ;' ' the consumption of an estate ;' or, ' being devoured by worms ;' by ' the breath of his mouth,' he understands, ' the doctrine of the gospel,' which first dooms him to destruction, and then gradually accomplishes it. Rev. xix. 15, Isa. xl. 4." καταργησει, he explains, *to render ineffectual,* to strip him of his authority and power by means of a superior force. See Ezra iv. 21, 23, v. 5, vi. 8 ; and by the *coming of Christ* he understands, " the clear manifestation of his doctrine, and the prevalence of it among mankind." This interpretation appears to be very rational, and has been adopted in the paraphrase. It may perhaps be thought an objection to it that the best copies for αναλωσει read ανελει, which expresses rather a sudden and forcible, than a gradual removal. See Griesbach. See Grot. in ver. 7. Some understand the expression, of the facility with which Christ will destroy the *man of sin* at his appearance. Comp. Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9. So Benson. " This may refer to some signal overthrow of the papal dominion before the day of judgement." Newcome. See Rev. xviii. xx., which many suppose to refer to the same event. Others again think that the apostle refers to the coming of Christ to judgement, and that the *apostasy* will continue to that time. The event alone will fully explain the prophecy. Dr. Benson observes, that " the latter part of this verse should be inclosed in a parenthesis."

Ch. II. Ver. 8. light of evangelical truth. So that, antecedently to the appearance of Christ to judgement, this great apostasy shall be destroyed, and the pure uncorrupted principles of the gospel shall universally prevail. In the mean time great evils and disorders will arise from the temporary ascendency of the antichristian power.

9. Even him *whose coming is according to the operation of Satan*[1], *with all false miracles and signs*
10. *and wonders*[2], *and with all iniquitous deceit among those that are lost*[3], *because they received not the love of the truth that they might escape*[4].

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[1] *According to the operation of Satan*] *Satan* is a word of various import both in the Old Testament and the New. It signifies *opposition*; and is often put for the principle of opposition personified, Matt. xvi. 23. In Luke x. 18, it plainly signifies the *heathen idolatrous power*, which was to recede rapidly before the light of the gospel. Rev. ii. 13, "thou dwellest where Satan's seat is." Here it signifies *the idolatrous persecuting power*. See also Luke xxii. 31. In Rev. xii. 10, xx. 2 and 7, it seems to be used for the *antichristian persecuting power*, and in that sense it appears to me to be used here. The *man of sin*, the lawless one who was to be displayed immediately after the heathen empire was overthrown, was to be both an idolatrous and a persecuting power, and was to use the same methods, both of fraud and violence, to impose upon and to mislead those who were indifferent to truth, which had been used by heathen and idolatrous persecutors. This was notoriously the case with that corrupt Christianity which was supported by the civil power under Constantine, and with all corrupt establishments of Christianity to the present day, of every description, and in all parts of the world.

[2] *With all false miracles*, &c.] "The word ψευδες seems equally to belong to all the foregoing substantives." Wakefield.

[3] *Those that are lost.*] "in a state of final perdition, while guilty of religious imposture." Newcome. But I think the expression refers to the deceived rather than to the deceivers; and that it denotes their being lost to the Christian religion, rather

Ch. II. Ver. 10.

The power to which I allude is an idolatrous power, exalting itself in the Christian church, and armed with civil authority; and, like other heathen superstitions, it will endeavour to support itself by persecution, and by false pretences to miraculous powers, to arts of sorcery, and other gross delusions, which may impose upon the understandings of the weak and ignorant.—And these impostures will have great effect upon a race of men who, while they profess the Christian name, will be utter strangers to the genuine principles and spirit of the Christian religion; and who will have fallen into this wretched state in consequence of a criminal indifference to truth, and a disgraceful neglect of those important doctrines, an habitual and practical regard to which would have preserved them from so shameful a degeneracy.

5. The apostle further declares, that this delusion should be permitted to prevail, as a just punishment of professing Christians for their indifference to truth, ver. 11, 12.

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than their exclusion from final salvation; for no doubt there are many virtuous characters, even in the most corrupt church, as there also were even in the heathen world.

[4] *They received not the love of the truth that they might escape:*] *i. e.* that they might escape from apostasy and from those delusions of the *man of sin*, from which the love of truth would effectually have preserved them. *To be saved*, in this connexion, no more relates to *final salvation*, than *to be lost* in the preceding clause relates to *final perdition*. Dr. Chandler justly observes, that "an upright, honest regard to truth and righteousness is the surest preservative in the world against destructive errors." See also Benson on ver. 11.

Ch. II. Ver. 11. 12. *And for this reason, God will send them a mighty delusion* [1], *to believe that lying* power [2], *to the end that* [3] *all might be condemned* [4] *who believed not the truth, but took pleasure in iniquity* [5].

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[1] *God will send them a mighty delusion.*] "will permit to prevail among them, not overruling second causes." Newcome; who renders the clause, "a mighty working of error." "such effectual delusion." Wakefield. It means a delusion of the grossest kind, which shall induce them to believe the most palpable absurdities and falsehoods, and to receive them as fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

[2] *That lying* power.] So Wakefield. They would not embrace the sacred truth of the gospel, and therefore they must entertain that error, those false and lying doctrines which were contrary to and subversive of it.

[3] *To the end that.*] "ἵνα in this verse expresses the event." Newcome.

[4] *Might be condemned.*] "judged and condemned by the righteous sentence of God." Chandler.

[5] *Who took pleasure in iniquity.*] "in such deceit." Wakefield. "The word signifies, 'entirely to approve and acquiesce in any thing as matter of their choice, and perfectly agreeable to them." Chandler.

Dr. Chandler adds, "I think it is impossible we should be at a loss how or where to apply this prophecy. Every part of it is such a perfect description of the papacy of the church of Rome, that if St. Paul had been alive, and seen the usurpation, and pride, and apostasy of that See, he could scarce have described it in stronger and in livelier colours, or by more peculiar and distinguishing characteristics, than he hath done in the prophecy before us." It cannot indeed be denied that the church of Rome is a very considerable branch of the apostate church; but it is not the whole of it. And there are other churches, nearer home, which if the apostle Paul had visited, it is much to be feared that he would have found even in them, both in doctrine and in practice, too near a resemblance to that corrupt idolatrous doctrine, and that arrogant persecuting spirit, which was to characterize the apostasy of the latter days.

There is no reason to regard establishments *as such*, that is, the protection and encouragement of Christianity by the civil magistrate, as constituting a mark of the apostate church. Those establishments only are antichristian which support cor-

A practical belief of the genuine doctrines of the gospel is, as I have just observed, the great preservative from error and vice, and indifference to truth lies at the foundation of all the future corruptions of the Christian religion, both in faith and practice. As a just punishment for this want of enlightened and active zeal, God will permit so strong a spirit of delusion to possess the apostate church, that men professing Christianity will openly reject its most obvious and salutary truths, and greedily imbibe the most gross, palpable, and pernicious errors. The consequence of which will be proportionate depravity of morals; which, with regard to multitudes, will terminate in just and insupportable punishment. Ch. II. Ver. 12.

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rupt doctrine and idolatrous worship: such as that of Jesus Christ, the holy spirit, the Virgin Mary, and other dead men and women; and above all, when these corrupt doctrines and heathenish practices are enforced by pains and penalties and persecutions. This completes the character of the *man of sin*. And to say the truth, there are many churches not established by law, who exhibit as much of the spirit of the apostate church as popery ever did. What can we think of those who in the seventeenth century, when petitioning for their own toleration, expressly stipulated that their Antitrinitarian brethren should be excluded? Or of their descendants in the present day, who while applying for the repeal of persecuting statutes which bear hard upon themselves, insist that chains much heavier than their own shall continue to bind the consciences of catholics? If this be not the spirit of antichrist, it is hard to say what is.

SECTION III.

Ch. II. *THE APOSTLE expresses his gratitude to God for their election and invitation to the privileges of the Gospel; exhorts them to stedfastness; offers his prayers for them, and requests theirs for himself and his associates, and declares his entire confidence in their good principles and virtuous resolutions.*—Ch. ii. 13—iii. 8.

1. The apostle gives thanks to God for their election, and for their invitation to participate in the privileges and blessings of the gospel, ver. 13, 14.

Ver. 13. *But we ought*[1] *always to give thanks to God on*

[1] *But we ought,* &c.] The apostle having denounced the judgements of God upon those who through indifference to truth had exposed, or would expose, themselves to gross and pernicious delusions, proceeds to comfort the Thessalonians, by assuring them that they were not the persons to whom he alluded; and by expressing his confidence in their adherence to the Christian doctrine. The apostle speaks of them as *beloved of God,* in the Jewish sense of the words, as being distinguished by privileges: see Rom. ix. 13. They were chosen from the beginning, as having been selected to receive the benefit of the gospel soon after its first publication in Macedonia. Acts xvii., 1 Thess. ii. 2. They were chosen to salvation, or rather to deliverance: see ver. 10. *i. e.* to a deliverance from idolatry and vice. This was accomplished by belief of the truth, *i. e.* by a profession of faith in Christ; and by sanctification of the Spirit, or a visible separation from the unbelieving world by the gifts of the holy spirit. Rom. viii. 15—17. Being thus chosen, they were by the preaching of the apostles invited to the profession of the gospel; and the great design of all was, that they might

your account, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit[2], *and belief in the truth: unto which he hath invited you through our gospel, to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Ch. II. Ver. 14.

Think not, my dear brethren, who are most highly favoured by God, that it is my intention to represent you as in the number of those who will be justly condemned because of their indifference to truth. On the contrary, I continually thank God on your account, as I am in duty bound, that it was his pleasure to select you among the first of your countrymen to be rescued from the bondage of ignorance and idolatry, to be consecrated to himself and separated from your heathen neighbours by your profession of the Christian faith, and your participation of the gifts of the holy spirit: and our

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obtain final happiness, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, that of which he is now in possession, and which he has promised to bestow.—Thus we see how little mystery there is in the apostle's doctrine, if his expressions are interpreted in a fair and proper sense, and how little foundation is laid in the scriptures for the strange doctrines of absolute and unconditional election and reprobation by an eternal and arbitrary decree. See Chandler and Benson.

[2] *Sanctification of the spirit.*] "πνευμα *denotat illa dona spiritus, quibus Thessalonicenses convicti de veritate, et emendati mente fuerunt, ipsa doctrina Christi, quæ, quoniam perfectior est lege Mosaica, sæpe in N. T.* πνευμα *appellatur.*" Rosenmuller. So Wakefield, by a *spiritual purification.* More correctly, as I think, Dr. Chandler: "by the spirit in his extraordinary gifts God gave them the assurance that he had accepted them: this was the wonderful evidence and sure token that God had sanctified, and separated them to himself."

Ch. II. Ver. 14. gratitude is still further enhanced by the recollection that we ourselves were honoured as the messengers to communicate to you the glad tidings of the gospel, and to invite you to enter into the Christian community; the privileges of which, if duly improved, will ensure your ultimate admission into that everlasting state of glory and felicity which Jesus our master has revealed, of which he, as our forerunner, is already in possession, and into which he will finally introduce all his faithful followers.

2. The apostle exhorts them to stedfastness in their profession of the gospel, and prays for their establishment in it, ver. 15—17.

15. *Therefore, brethren, stand firm*[1], *and hold fast*[2] *the lessons*[3] *which you have been taught by us, whether by discourse or by letter.*

Possessed of these privileges, and animated by these hopes, let no consideration induce you to forfeit your glorious prize. Whatever assaults may be made upon your faith and virtue, stand fast; hold firm, and do not for a moment abandon those pre-

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[1] *Stand firm.*] στηκετε. "This word," says Dr. Chandler, "is used to denote great firmness, constancy, and resolution, in maintaining our purposes, standing unmovably against, and vigorously resisting, all opposition."

[2] *Hold fast.*] κρατειτε. "It signifies to hold *by conquest*, and firmly to maintain what we have in possession." Chandler.

[3] *The lessons.*] παραδοσεις. "It sometimes signifies unwritten traditions, transmitted from generation to generation. Here it cannot have that sense, and would more properly have been rendered *institutions* or *doctrines*." Chandler. So Wakefield. "the truths, whether respecting doctrines or facts." Newcome.

cious truths which we taught you when present, and have written to you since we departed, and which lie at the foundation of all our immortal expectations. Ch. II. Ver. 15.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself[4], *and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and graciously given*[5] *us everlasting consolation and good hope, encourage your hearts and establish you in every good doctrine and work.* 16. 17.

Persevere, my Christian friends, and may our lord and master Jesus Christ assist you by his doctrine, by his example, by his promises, and by the gift of his spirit. And may the great God himself, his Father and our Father, who has approved his paternal affection towards us by freely and gratuitously imparting to us the rich consolations and everlasting hopes of the gospel, grant his blessing to your virtuous efforts, encourage and comfort you amidst perils and sufferings, establish your faith in the doctrine of the gospel, and render that faith

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[4] *May our Lord Jesus Christ himself,* &c.] "This is only another mode of praying that these Christians may obtain all the blessings of the gospel of which Christ is the founder; and the expression is not to be understood literally, as if Christ had himself immediate access to the hearts of men, and administered consolation to them. Indeed God himself does this only by means of natural causes: by such knowledge as is naturally adapted to produce that effect. In like manner, God gives us our daily bread, but not in a miraculous way." Priestley.—Chandler and Benson understand this as a direct prayer to Christ.

[5] *Graciously given.*] So Wakefield. "by the gospel scheme has inspired us with eternal consolation." Harwood.

Ch. II. Ver. 17. abundantly productive of the fruits of holiness and universal virtue.

3. The apostle requests that they would pray for his protection and success, ch. iii. ver. 1, 2.

Ch. III. Ver. 1. *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the doctrine of the Lord may run and be glorified*[1], *even as*

2. *among you*[2]*: and that we may be delivered from inconsistent*[3] *and wicked men; for all are not faithful*[4].

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[1] *Run and be glorified.*] "an allusion to the races in the ancient games, in which he who ran with the greatest speed obtained the most honourable prize. The apostle prays that the gospel may spread through the nations with the greatest speed, that it might obtain the crown of success." Chandler. "may have free course." Newcome. "that the doctrine of the Lord may continue running and gaining glory." Wakefield.

[2] *Even as among you.*] "This is giving them the highest commendation, and speaking of them in the most respectful manner." Chandler.

[3] *From inconsistent,* &c.] ατοπων. "There is scarcely any English word," says Dr. Chandler, "which exactly answers it. The ancient glossaries variously expound it, by *wicked, filthy, strange, lawless, irrational, absurd.* It signifies something which *has not place;* and, by an easy figure, what is *absurd, indecent, unbecoming,* and excites *surprise.*" The expression here is, as he observes, "perfectly agreeable to the place before us;" as the apostle refers probably to converted Jews, who endeavoured to depreciate his character, and oppose his doctrine, whose conduct therefore was peculiarly inconsistent, and might justly excite surprise. The apostle was at Corinth when he wrote this epistle, where a formidable party was soon formed against him, at the head of which was some eloquent judaizing Christian; and he might already discover with pain the symptoms of this bad spirit in the Corinthian church. Indeed it is certain that he did observe it; which was the reason that he conducted himself there with peculiar caution, and refused to receive any remuneration for his services. 2 Cor. xii. 13, xi. 9—12.

[4] *All are not faithful.*] Literally, *all men have not faith;*

Upon this subject little remains to be added. I request your prayers for myself and my associates in the ministry, that we may not labour in vain: but that the gospel of Christ, which we preach, may advance with a rapid and glorious career, and that it may be as successful here at Corinth and in other places as it has been at Thessalonica, and may produce the same effects of love and good works amongst others which it produces among you. And pray likewise for us, that the object of our ministry may not be defeated by those absurd and inconsistent professors of Christianity, who from prejudice, or pride, or other bad motives, oppose our doctrine and depreciate our character. For, strange as it may seem, persons of this description are not uncommon among us, and men professing to be believers in Christ, are in fact enemies to Christian truth, and to those who teach it. Ch. III. Ver. 2.

4. He expresses his cheerful hope that by the assistance of Christ they will adhere faithfully to the doctrines and the precepts of the gospel, ver. 3—5.

But the Lord[5] *is faithful who will establish you,* 3.

a frivolous observation, if he meant only to say, "that all were not believers:" but very pertinent and much to his purpose if he intended to assert that, "though they professed to believe, they were not faithful to his doctrine." See Chandler; who renders the words, "credit, or trust, is not due to all."

[5] *The Lord.*] I am inclined to think, with most expositors, that Christ is the person here intended; and that, by a figure of speech, he is said to do that which is accomplished by his doctrine and promises.

Ch. III. Ver. 4. *and preserve you from the evil* one [1]. *And we have confidence in the Lord* [2] *concerning you, that ye both perform and will perform what we enjoin you.*

5. *And may the Lord direct your hearts unto the love of God, and the patience of Christ* [3].

It is however a satisfaction to think, that though men are treacherous Christ is faithful. His doctrines are true: his promises shall be fulfilled to their utmost extent: his gospel shall support you under all your trials: it shall keep you from sinking in the season of persecution: it shall preserve you from apostasy, and from returning to your former subjection to the powers of darkness. And indeed I am fully persuaded that you are so firmly attached to the principles of the gospel, that you will continue to comply cheerfully with all my apo-

[1] *From the evil* one.] τȣ πονηρȣ. See Chandler and Wakefield: *i.e.* will preserve you from apostasy; from returning again to the dominion and empire of Satan, the symbolical monarch of the unbelieving world, whose authority you renounced when you became the subjects of Christ. *The evil one,* the devil, Satan: *i.e.* "the adversaries of the gospel; especially the unbelieving Jews." Benson.

[2] *We have confidence in the Lord,* &c.] *q. d.* We entertain a pious and Christian confidence concerning you; being conscious of the authority by which we speak, and of the power of Christian principles; believing you to be sincere in your profession, and recollecting your past fidelity and perseverance, we are confident that, by the help of God, you will continue to obey our injunctions.

[3] *May the Lord—patience of Christ.*] "The equivalent antecedent is here used for the pronoun, as John iv. 11." Newcome; who, with the common version, renders the words, *the patient waiting for Christ.* The literal translation is, *the patience of Christ: i.e.* says Dr. Chandler, "the patience which Christ exercised; as Jam. v. 11, the patience of Job, is that patience of which he was so great an example."

stolical injunctions, as you now do, and have hitherto done. Ch. III. Ver. 5.

And may your increasing knowledge of the principles, and your happy experience of the power and excellence, of that gospel which by the command of Christ, whose servants and messengers we are, we have communicated to you, produce its genuine effects upon every heart! May it particularly guide you to that first of duties, the love of God, the most ardent gratitude for his great mercy by Jesus Christ, manifesting itself in all its genuine effects of love and good works! And may nothing move you from the profession of the gospel; but in all your dangers, your trials, and your sufferings, look to your great exemplar Jesus Christ: imitate his patience, fortitude, and magnanimity; and, supported by his grace, be willing to suffer as he suffered before you.

SECTION IV.

THE APOSTLE animadverts upon the conduct of some idle, officious and disorderly persons in the church of Thessalonica; recommends quiet and industry after his own example: orders that the untractable should undergo the censure of the church, and concludes with the apostolical benediction written with his own hand. Ch. iii. 6—18.

1. He cautions the Thessalonian Christians to

Ch. III. avoid the society of idle and disorderly persons, ver. 6.

Ver. 6. *Now we command you*[1], *brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw yourselves from every brother who walketh irregularly*[2], *and not agreeably to the instructions which they received from us*[3].

I regret that I am under the necessity of again introducing a disagreeable subject which I mentioned in my last letter, especially as I find that my friendly cautions have not been attended with the desired effect. I now, therefore, my beloved brethren, in the name and by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, require and charge those of you whose

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[1] *We command,* &c.] The apostle had given the Thessalonians a hint in his former epistle, 1 Thess. iv. 11, against idleness and officious intrusion. This advice, however, appears to have been little regarded by those to whom it was addressed. And the apostle having been informed, perhaps by the messengers who had returned after having carried his first letter, that this idle meddlesome spirit had increased, possibly under the pretext that the day of judgement being so near it was of no use to attend to any worldly concerns, in this second epistle he animadverts upon it with greater severity, and very properly holds out his own example of industry and independence, to show that a belief in the approaching advent of Christ ought by no means to slacken their attention to the duties of their stations. The apostle here expresses himself with a tone of authority. "The word," says Dr. Chandler, "implies an authoritative order such as generals give to their soldiers, or princes to their subjects."

[2] *Who walketh irregularly.*] ατακτως· "who does not keep his rank, and by breaking it puts others into confusion; a military term." Dr. Chandler.

[3] *Instructions which they received from us.*] παραδοσεις, *traditions.* See ch. ii. 15; *they received from us: i. e.* either by word of mouth while we were with you, or by the epistle which we lately sent. The received text reads, "he received."

conduct is irreproachable, to withdraw yourselves immediately from the society of those professors of the Christian religion who neglect the Christian discipline and rule of life, whose behaviour is a disgrace to their profession, who treat my instructions and admonitions with contempt, and whose misconduct introduces confusion and disorder into the church. Ch. III. Ver. 6.

2. The apostle states his own exemplary conduct while he resided among them, in working diligently for his subsistence though he had a right to a maintenance from them, ver. 7—9.

For ye yourselves know how it becometh you to imitate us. For we were not irregular among you: nor did we eat any man's bread at free cost. But with labour and fatigue, we worked night and day, that we might not be burthensome to any of you[4]. 7. 8.

You recollect without doubt perfectly well the instruction which we gave you, and the example which, from the knowledge we had of the character of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, I and my associates thought it advisable to exhibit for your imi-

[4] *With labour and fatigue,* &c.] See 1 Thess. ii. 9. The apostle probably knew that there were many idle people at Thessalonica who would profess Christianity, if they could be maintained by it in idleness and gossiping. To preclude expectations of this kind, he and his associates waved their claim to a maintenance, and worked diligently at their manual occupations to earn a subsistence. Yet it appears that even this would not have been sufficient for their support without the kind assistance repeatedly sent to them by the Philippians, Phil. iv. 16.

Ch. III. Ver. 8. tation. In no respect did we deviate from our character as Christian teachers: nor did we encourage idleness by our example. We accepted gratuitous support from no one: but while we employed the day in teaching publicly and privately the doctrine of Christ, we worked hard, early and late, at our manual occupations, in order to procure subsistence for ourselves, that we might neither put any of you to inconvenience to maintain us, nor encourage others by our example to fasten themselves upon you for support.

9. *Not because we were destitute of authority*[1], *but to make ourselves an example to you, that ye might imitate us.*

Though we maintained ourselves, it was not because we had no just claim upon you for a decent and liberal support: for it is but reasonable, and Christ has directed, that a suitable compensation should be made to the preachers of the gospel for the occupation of their time, and thoughts, and labours. But in this instance we waved our just right for the sake of setting a beneficial example to you.

3. The apostle reminds them of the maxim which he had laid down to discourage idleness.

10. *For indeed*[2], *when we were with you, we gave*

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[1] *Not destitute of authority.*] See 1 Cor. ix. 1—14, 2 Cor. xi. 7, &c. "Not because we have no right." Newcome.

[2] *For indeed.*] We worked with our own hands, *for* we had laid down this maxim, &c. and we were willing to show that our doctrine and practice were consistent. See Benson.

you this charge, If any man *will not work, let him not eat*[3]. Ch. III. Ver. 10.

That the design of our example might not be mistaken, we accompanied it with positive precept, and gave you this maxim as a warning against idleness, That the man who will not do what he can to support himself, has no right to expect to be supported by others.

4. He advises idle and officious persons to mind their own business and to live in peace, ver. 11, 12.

For we hear that some among you walk irregularly, doing no business, but being impertinently busy[4]. *Now those who are such, we charge and* 11. 12.

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[3] *If any* man, &c.] "It is not charity to support idleness; nor have they any right to eat bread, who can labour for it, but refuse." Chandler; who observes, that "by the laws of Solon, idleness was discouraged, and by those of Draco it was punished with death." "This seems to have been a proverb both among Jews and heathen." Benson.

[4] *Doing no business, but being impertinently busy.*] μηδεν εργαζομενες, αλλα περιεργαζομενες. Dr. Chandler observes, "There is a turn of words in the Greek which can scarcely be imitated in any other language: *q. d.* We hear there are some who do no business, but are busy-bodies. The word signifies, 'to be curious and inquisitive into the affairs of others, impertinently to meddle in things in which we have no concern.'" Perhaps they might ramble from house to house, and dissuade every body from working, pretending that Christians now had nothing to do but to talk about the day of judgement. This idleness and impertinence would create much mischief in families, and expose Christianity to great scandal among unbelievers. Dr. Benson has a good note upon the great evil of a busy, meddlesome, calumniating spirit in general, especially of religious detraction. But possibly the misconduct of the Thessalonians upon which the apostle so justly animadverts, was merely such as I have represented.

Ch. III. Ver. 12. *exhort, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that they work quietly and maintain themselves*[1].

The admonition which I suggest is but too seasonable. For I am credibly informed, through the same channel by which I learned your great error concerning the day of judgement, that some among you who make a profession of the Christian religion act in a manner very unworthy of their character, making use of the general expectation of the immediate appearance of Christ, or of some other plea equally groundless, as an excuse for idleness. And as though all attention to secular business were now superfluous, they totally neglect their proper occupations, and going about from house to house, they intrude into the concerns and disturb the peace of their neighbours with their senseless babbling. Now, as the apostle of Christ, I strictly charge, and as affectionately concerned for their welfare I earnestly exhort and intreat, all persons of this description to reform their conduct immediately, and as they tender the authority of Christ, and value their connexion with the Christian community, to return to their occupations without delay, to keep themselves quiet, and to support themselves by their own industry; so that they may give no trouble to their fellow Christians, and may offer no occasion to unbelievers to report that Christianity encourages idleness and impertinence.

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[1] *And maintain themselves.*] Literally, *eat their own bread: i. e.* "the bread earned by their own industry." Newcome.

5. The apostle gives advice to regular and well-disposed Christians how to conduct themselves with respect to such as are idle and disorderly, ver. 13—15. Ch. III.

But, brethren[2], *be not ye weary*[3] *in well-doing*[4]. Ver. 13.

As to you, my Christian friends, who are not chargeable with the faults upon which I have animadverted, I intreat you not to be discouraged from the practice of virtue, nor to be restrained from acts of benevolence and sympathy, by the occasional abuse of your kindness by these unworthy intruders.

And if any one disobey our injunctions in this epistle, mark that man[5], *and hold no intercourse with him*[6], *that he may be ashamed*[7]. *Yet, regard him not as an enemy, but admonish*[8] *him as a brother.* 14. 15.

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[2] *But, brethren.*] The apostle having finished his advice and reproof to the culpable, now addresses himself to those Christians who had supported a good character, and gives them advice suitable to the occasion. See Benson.

[3] *Be not ye weary.*] "The original word signifies 'to fail in any thing through negligence, sloth, or dejecting fear.'" Chandler, from Hesychius.

[4] *Well-doing.*] "Not virtue in general, but the practice of kindness and beneficence. Gal. vi. 9." Benson. He adds, "The ancients thus interpreted the words, 'let not their sloth hinder your charity in giving them what is necessary to preserve life.'"

[5] *Mark that man.*] Grotius and Le Clerc understand the advice, *q. d.* "signify that man in an epistle to me." This is a sense that the words will bear, but the common interpretation better suits the connexion. See Benson and Chandler.

[6] *Hold no intercourse.*] "avoid his company, keep him at a distance." Chandler.

[7] *That he may be ashamed.*] ινα εντραπη. "The word," says Dr. Chandler, "is very emphatical; it includes the double notion both of shame and of a change of sentiment and conduct."

[8] *Regard him not as an enemy, but admonish,* &c.] They

Ch. III. Ver. 15. Further, if it should happen, which indeed I am unwilling to suppose, that any one of these officious meddlers should persist in wilful disobedience to the advice I have now given, you will do well to pass a suitable censure upon him: and agree among yourselves to hold no intercourse with him, and not to admit him into your houses. This, if any thing, will bring him to himself, it will make him ashamed of his conduct, and will produce reformation. But do not carry your censures too far; do not, immediately at least, exclude him from the Christian church: but as a fellow Christian, who has been misled, suggest to him those considerations which will bring him to a better mind.

6. He expresses his good wishes for them all, ver. 16.

16. *Now the Lord of peace himself*[1] *give you peace*[2], *by all means, at all times*[3]. *The Lord be with you all.*

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were not to excommunicate, but to admonish, νουθετειτε. "The word," says Dr. Chandler, "signifies to *rebuke, correct*, or *chastise for a fault*." The apostle advises that it should not be managed with too great severity.

[1] *The Lord of peace.*] "May the Author of all good grant you all kinds of happiness." Dr. Priestley. I rather, with most interpreters, suppose that Christ is the person intended. "He," says Dr. Chandler, "is called by Isaiah the Prince of Peace, because he has reconciled both Jews and Gentiles to God and to one another, creating peace between God and them, and commanding them to follow the things that make for peace."

[2] *Give you peace:*] *i. e.* by his gospel infusing a pacific spirit. This prayer, or rather devout wish, was peculiarly seasonable; as impertinence of intrusion on the one hand, and severity of reproof on the other, might provoke contention.

[3] *By all means, at all times.*] So Mr. Wakefield; who, upon

Beware that you do not interrupt the peace of the church on the one hand by an intrusive spirit, or on the other by harsh censure. And may Jesus Christ, the great messenger of peace, by the spirit of his gospel, communicate and preserve to you, at all times, and without interruption, the invaluable blessing of peace in its most extensive signification. May his gospel, with all its blessings, be the portion of you all without exception. Ch. III. Ver. 16.

7. The epistle concludes with the benediction written with the apostle's own hand, ver. 17, 18.

The salutation by the hand of me Paul, which is my *token in every epistle. Thus I am wont to write*[4]. *The favour of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*[5] 17. 18.

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the authority of the Syriac and Æthiopic, leaves out τροπῳ, and understands καιρῳ. Many good copies read τοπῳ, *place*. See Griesbach.

[4] *Thus I am wont to write.*] ἑτω γραφω. Mark xv. 6. "He released: *i. e.* he was wont to release." Benson, Glassius. The apostle seems to have suspected that somebody had forged an epistle in his name, see ch. ii. 2; and therefore he gives them a token by which they may always distinguish a genuine from a spurious epistle, *viz.* the form of the concluding benediction, and its being wholly written by himself. Some suppose he wrote in cypher; but this supposition is unnecessary. It is probable that he wrote Greek ill, Gal. vi. 11; and the peculiarity of his hand-writing would be a sufficient proof of its genuineness. The expression *in every epistle* implies, that these Epistles to the Thessalonians were not the first which the apostle had written; but as they are of the earliest date of those which are still extant, it is obvious that some epistles which the apostle wrote are lost.

[5] *The favour,* &c.] "May all the blessings of the gospel attend you." Dr. Priestley.

Ch. III. Ver. 18. The body of this epistle is written by a person whom I employ for that purpose; but the salutation which follows is in my own hand. This is the mark by which the genuineness of an epistle of mine may always be known, so that you will be in no danger of being imposed upon by any spurious letter pretended to be sent by me. Observe the handwriting, in which I express the following cordial wish for your happiness. May the gospel, with all its blessings, which is the free gift of God by Jesus Christ, be yours, now and for ever. Amen.

THE FIRST EPISTLE

OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

T I M O T H Y.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

TIMOTHY was a native of Lystra, a city of Lycaonia in the Lesser Asia. His father was a heathen, but his mother was a Jewess, and both she and her mother were persons of eminent piety, who had taken great pains to instruct Timothy from his childhood in the knowledge of the Jewish scriptures. 2 Tim. i. 5. iii. 14, 15. These pious women had probably been converted to the Christian religion during the first visit which the apostle had made at Lystra A.D. 47, when he and Barnabas, after having been worshiped as Gods, because of the miraculous cure of the lame man, were persecuted at the instigation of the unbelieving Jews, and the apostle Paul was nearly stoned to death by

the mob. Acts xiv. The second visit which the apostle made to Lystra was A.D. 51, when Timothy being grown up to manhood, and having obtained by his exemplary conduct a high reputation among the Christians at Lystra, and Iconium, and his father being probably dead, the apostle determined to take him as an associate in the mission. Acts xvi. Having been set apart for this purpose by prayer and imposition of hands by the elders of the church, 1 Tim. iv. 14, and endued with spiritual gifts by the apostle, he accompanied Paul and Silas in their journeys: nor does it appear that he ever afterwards left the apostle, except when he was deputed upon some special mission. And Paul joins the name of Timothy with his own in the inscription of several of his epistles.

The time when this epistle was written has been a subject of considerable discussion. It is generally concluded that it was written to Timothy at Ephesus, soon after the apostle had quitted that city to go into Macedonia, ch. i. 3. One such journey is recorded in the history of the Acts, ch. xx. But as it appears, from the first epistle to the Corinthians, that Timothy was not with the apostle at Ephesus when he wrote that epistle, and as in this letter to Timothy he expresses an expectation of returning speedily to relieve him from the burdensome office which he had imposed upon him, it has been argued, that this epistle was not written to Timothy upon that occasion, but in the course of another journey, which is not mentioned by Luke;

and which is supposed to have taken place about A. D. 65, after the apostle's release from his first imprisonment [1].

But as, when the apostle took leave of the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, Acts xx. 25, he solemnly declares that he *knew* that they would see his face no more, it is unreasonable to believe that he ever visited Ephesus again, unless we have the most direct and indisputable evidence of the fact: but no such evidence is produced; and many circumstances are alleged which are thought to make it probable that this epistle was written during the journey recorded by Luke. From the similarity between the directions given to Timothy and those addressed to Titus, it seems probable that these epistles were written nearly at the same time: and we have some reason to conclude that the epistle to Titus was sent by the apostle before he left Ephesus. It seems likewise evident, from the very particular description which the apostle gives of the qualifications of bishops and deacons, that Timothy's business at Ephesus was to select proper persons for these honourable offices; but it is very improbable that the churches in and about Ephesus should have been left in an unorganized state, till after the apostle's release from his first imprisonment. Indeed, we know that they were not so; for the elders or bishops of Ephesus came to meet the apostle at the

[1] The advocates of this hypothesis are Pearson, Whitby, Basnage, Cave, Fabricius, Mill, Paley, and Macknight.

port of Miletus, in his way to Jerusalem. The apostle when writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi. 11) exhorts, that no person should despise Timothy on account of his youth, and in this epistle (ch. iv. 12) he advises the evangelist to conduct himself with such gravity and circumspection that no person may treat him with contempt because of his youth. These epistles therefore were probably written nearly at the same time. And this advice would be more suitable to the age of Timothy at this time, than it would ten years afterwards, when he had passed the season of youth. It is true that the evangelist was not at Ephesus when the epistle to the Corinthians was written: but the apostle undoubtedly expected to see him before he left Ephesus (1 Cor. xvi. 11), and when he departed he might expect to return soon; intending perhaps to proceed directly to Corinth and to return immediately; but meeting Titus in Macedonia, he received from him such an account of the state of things at Corinth, as induced him to postpone his visit to that city for a year. Instead therefore of returning to Timothy at Ephesus, he directed Timothy to come to him at Macedonia; where we accordingly find his name united with the apostle's in the inscription of the second epistle to the Corinthians, which probably was not written till more than a year after the epistle to Timothy. For these reasons Dr. Lardner and others have concluded that this epistle was written from Troas, or Macedonia, late in the

spring, or early in the summer of A.D. 56, before the apostle had had an interview with Titus[1].

Nevertheless, the objections against this hypothesis appear to me absolutely insurmountable. It is morally impossible that the apostle Paul, writing in confidence to his pupil and associate Timothy, immediately after he had left Ephesus in consequence of the tumult excited by Demetrius and the artists, in which his own life had been exposed to the most imminent peril, and appointing him during his absence to superintend the concerns of the church at Ephesus, should not in the whole course of the epistle make the most distant allusion to those dreadful disturbances, by which he had himself been driven from the city probably some weeks or months sooner than he intended. And the argument derives tenfold strength from the consideration that in the second epistle to the Corinthians, which was written more than a year afterwards, when his feelings must of course be considerably abated, he alludes to the tumult at Ephesus, and to the dangers to which he had been exposed in Asia, in language almost expressive of horror; which plainly shows how sensibly the recollection even at that distance of time affected his feelings, and how deep an impression these scenes had left upon his mind. Whereas, in the epistle to Timothy, written when he had hardly recovered from the first alarm, he

[1] This is the opinion of Lightfoot, Baronius, Estius, Benson, Doddridge, Lardner, Grotius, Hammond, Witsius, &c.

takes no more notice of Demetrius's tumult than if it had never happened. In fact, nothing can be conceived more quiet than the apostle's mind appears to have been from the beginning to the end of the epistle. This state of mind would have been utterly impossible in the supposed circumstances.

It seems therefore necessary to look out for another date to this epistle; and I beg leave, with great diffidence, to offer one which, though not wholly free from difficulties, appears to me less objectionable than either of the preceding hypotheses.

If Dr. Ashworth's supposition, which, to say the least, is as probable as any other, be allowed; namely, that the apostle Paul visited Crete in some portion of the three years which are assigned for his residence in Ephesus and its vicinity, taking Titus with him as his associate in that mission, he would probably leave the concerns of the church at Ephesus in the hands of the evangelist Timothy, who had been his companion in the ministry about four or five years. And as it is possible that the apostle might be induced to undertake this mission, on a sudden, in consequence of some unforeseen opportunity which occurred, he might not have had time to communicate to Timothy those particular instructions which it would be necessary to give to so young a man when he was invested with such an important trust. He avails himself therefore of the first opportunity which offered after his arrival in Crete, to dispatch a letter containing specific directions for his conduct in the arduous circum-

stances in which this youthful evangelist had been left: which epistle would also be his warrant with the Ephesians for any measures which he might think necessary to pursue. This was the First Epistle to Timothy: which, therefore, if these suppositions be allowed, ought to be dated from Crete.

This hypothesis seems to afford the easiest explanation of all the circumstances. It accounts for the style and tone of the epistle, as addressed to the evangelist when he was very young; and more especially, for that particular detail of the qualifications of those who were to be selected as officers of the church, which would not have been so necessary to a person of maturer age and experience. It easily accounts for the total silence of the apostle upon the subject of the disturbances at Ephesus, and the dangers to which he and the other teachers of the gospel had been exposed in that superstitious city; and for that calmness and quietude of mind with which this epistle was dictated, so different from that which appears in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. If it be objected that the apostle would hardly have intrusted such important powers to so young a person, Timothy being at this time probably no more than four- or five-and-twenty, that objection holds equally against the supposition that the apostle wrote the letter at the time when he left Ephesus in his way to Corinth, after the tumult of Demetrius. In fact, we know, from the tenor of the epistle, that Timothy was a very young man at

the time when it was written ; and let it be remembered, that the officers which he was appointed to select, were not like bishops, presbyters, and deacons of modern times, but merely committees of respectable men to regulate the public meetings of the assembly, to instruct and exhort the members, or to manage its temporal concerns, and to provide for the poor. It was also very desirable, for the sake of order and regularity, that this arrangement should be made as speedily as possible without waiting for the apostle's return, which must necessarily be uncertain ; and Timothy, though young, must have been eminently qualified to take the lead in this business ; because the Ephesians, being new converts, were of course strangers to the customs of the churches, while Timothy, who had travelled with the apostle for several years, had seen the method in which the churches planted by him had been respectively organized. It should seem, therefore, that when the apostle left Ephesus, he fully expected to return soon ; but, knowing that his movements were not altogether in his own power, being sometimes impeded by his enemies, and at other times directed by express interposition of Christ himself, he appointed Timothy to superintend the affairs of the church during his absence ; and upon his arrival in Crete he wrote this epistle, to instruct his young associate how to act if he should himself be prevented from returning at the time proposed.

It adds considerably to the weight of the argument, that the Letters to Timothy and Titus have a great affinity to each other, not only in subject but in style; nearly as great as that between the epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians. The Epistle to Titus being written less in detail than that to Timothy, being addressed to an older man. This circumstance greatly adds to the presumption of their having been written nearly at the same time, and upon similar occasions, which, upon this hypothesis, they were; the Epistle to Timothy having been sent at the commencement, and that to Titus at the termination, of the apostle's mission to Crete.

One considerable objection obviously occurs to this hypothesis, which with some will be regarded as fatal. The apostle, at the beginning of his epistle, says, 1 Tim. i. 3, "I besought thee to remain at Ephesus when I *went into Macedonia*." And this is the reading in all copies and versions now extant. But that this letter could not have been written in the journey recorded Acts xx. when the apostle quitted Ephesus after the tumult of Demetrius, must, I think, be sufficiently apparent; and that the organization of the church at Ephesus would not have been left till after the apostle's release from his first imprisonment, and when Timothy was no longer a young man, is, I conceive, almost equally improbable. The difficulties in both cases are avoided by the proposed hypothesis; for

the adoption of which we must either accept the reading of Hilary, "I besought thee to remain at Ephesus (*cum ires*) when you were about to set out for Macedonia;" or we must suppose some early corruption of the text, which it is not now in our power to rectify: this, however, is not without example in the sacred writings.

Upon the whole, it appears probable to me that the First Epistle to Timothy was written by the apostle from Crete, some time in A.D. 55.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY is one of those, the genuineness of which was never disputed by the ancient churches, and there seems no reason to call it in question now. It is a composition of great value, both as it establishes the divine authority of the Christian religion by the testimony which it bears to those extraordinary facts upon which its evidence rests; and as it illustrates the moral tendency and beneficial effect of the Christian doctrine in the piety, benevolence, and zeal of these its earliest professors, and most eminent and successful teachers. And this epistle is particularly useful, as it delineates the temper and character which may justly be expected in those who are appointed to the honourable office of teachers and ministers in the church.

It is plain, from the tenor of the epistle, that the apostle Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus with power to instruct and organize the church during

his absence. And the design of the epistle is, to suggest salutary advice to the youthful evangelist to enable him to conduct himself with propriety and dignity, in a situation of great difficulty and delicacy.

Chapter First. The apostle, after a suitable introduction, warns the evangelist against false teachers, zealots for the law, and immoral in their conduct; he expresses his gratitude for his own conversion to the Christian religion, and his call to the apostolic office; he exhorts Timothy to persevere in the same honourable profession, and not to apostatize from the truth like some whom he mentions, and whom he had found it necessary to exclude from Christian communion.

Chapter Second. The apostle requires that Christians should intercede for all men, and especially for those who are invested with civil authority, that peace and truth may every where prevail, ver. 1—8. He then enjoins upon the female sex modesty, reserve, and silent subjection, enforcing his injunctions by arguments drawn from the Mosaic account of the first human pair, ver. 9—15.

Chapter Third. The evangelist having probably been directed to select proper persons to superintend the church, and to instruct its members, the apostle proceeds to enumerate the qualifications requisite for the honourable and successful discharge of the pastoral or episcopal office, ver. 1—7. He afterwards specifies the proper qualifications of dea-

cons and their families, whose office in the church he represents as highly honourable and useful when performed with fidelity and discretion, ver. 8—13; and concludes this part of his subject with expressing a hope that he should soon return to his friend, whom he in the mean time encourages to zeal and activity, by a brief representation of those facts which constitute the basis of the Christian faith, ver. 14—16.

CHAPTER FOURTH. The apostle foretells the great apostasy, the distinguishing character of which would be to impose distinctions and mortifications inconsistent with the liberal spirit of the gospel, ver. 1—5. He exhorts the evangelist to avoid such useless distinctions, and all other trifling questions, and to insist wholly upon those important doctrines which were the foundation of Christian hope, and the best motive to virtuous practice; and for the sake of which they willingly suffered persecution, ver. 6—11; and he particularly recommends it to him to secure the respect of others by a strictly virtuous and exemplary deportment, by diligent application to the improvement of his mind, and by a faithful persevering discharge of the duties of his office, ver. 12—16.

CHAPTER FIFTH. The apostle directs his young friend, in what manner to administer reproof with the best effect, ver. 1, 2. He then details the qualifications of widows who were justly entitled to be entered upon the list of such as were to partake of

the charitable distributions of the church, reminding him that these distributions could be only intended for those who were advanced in years, and who supported the most virtuous and honourable characters, ver. 3—16. He requires that the pastors of the society should have an equitable and liberal compensation for their labours, and that accusations against them should not be lightly received, ver. 17—20: and the apostle concludes this chapter with a solemn injunction upon the evangelist to observe his directions, to be impartial and deliberate in his proceedings, advising him to take due care of his health, and reminding him that the difference in human character required a correspondent difference in his treatment of different persons, ver. 21—25.

Chapter Sixth. The apostle strictly requires servants, or slaves, to learn from the principles of Christianity to yield a steady and cheerful obedience to their masters, whether Christians or heathen, and animadverts severely upon those who taught that Christianity put an end to civil distinctions, ver. 1—5. He represents the promises of the gospel as the most valuable treasure, and the best antidote against covetousness, 6—10. He solemnly enjoins upon the evangelist to persevere in the practice of virtue, in the profession of Christianity, and in the faithful discharge of his public duty, as he will answer for himself at the appearance of Jesus Christ, ver. 11—16. He charges him to direct the opulent to a wise and virtuous use of their wealth,

ver. 17—19; and having cautioned him against those who were desirous to corrupt the purity of the Christian faith with the vanities of a false philosophy, he concludes the epistle with his apostolical benediction, ver. 20, 21.

The Postscript to this epistle, which states that it was written from Laodicea, is unquestionably erroneous.

THE FIRST EPISTLE

TO

T I M O T H Y.

SECTION I.

AFTER a suitable introduction, the apostle reminds the evangelist of the reason why he had left him at Ephesus to supply his place in his absence, and urges him to resist the attempts of those who would impose the observance of the ceremonial law. Ch. i. 1—11. Ch. I.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

THE apostle affectionately inscribes the epistle to the evangelist, ver. 1, 2.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the appointment of God our Saviour, and of Christ Jesus[1] *our hope, to Timothy,* my *true son in the faith; favour, mercy, peace, from God our Father, and from Christ Jesus our Lord.* Ver. 1. 2.

[1] *Of Christ Jesus.*] This is the true reading: vide Griesbach. The received text reads, "the Lord Jesus Christ."

Ch. I. Ver. 2. I who am an apostle of Christ, commissioned to teach his doctrine and to bear witness to his resurrection, being appointed to this honourable office by the will of God, who is our deliverer from the yoke of idol worship and of ceremonial institution, and by the immediate interposition of Jesus Christ, whose doctrine is the foundation of our immortal hope, who appeared to me in the way to Damascus, and honoured me with a commission to teach the gospel,—I, Paul, address this epistle to my beloved Timothy, whom I have converted to the Christian doctrine, who follows my example with filial love and reverence, and for whom I feel the tenderest paternal regard; and to him I most sincerely wish an increasing participation of the blessings of the gospel, which are the free gift of divine mercy, and the possession of which comprehends every thing truly desirable both for this life and the next; to him may these blessings be communicated in the richest abundance from the mercy of God our benevolent Parent, and from Jesus our Master, who has been appointed by God as the medium of this his gracious dispensation to mankind.

2. He exhorts Timothy to continue at Ephesus, and to silence the false teachers, as he had given him in charge, ver. 3, 4.

3. *Continue*[1] *at Ephesus, as I intreated thee when*

[1] *Continue.*] προσμεινα, in the imperative mood. Castellio, Knatchbull, Bowyer, Wakefield.

I went into Macedonia[2], *that thou mayest charge certain* persons *not to teach different doctrines, nor to pay attention to fables, and to endless genealogies*[3], *which promote disputes, rather than that dispensation of God*[4], *which is by faith.* Ch. I. Ver. 4.

Being under the necessity of leaving Ephesus abruptly, and sooner than I intended, and before I had completed the settlement of the large society of Christians in that city and its vicinity, I intreated you to remain there while I proceeded to Macedonia in my way to Corinth. And I particularly requested that you would strictly charge certain persons who were disposed to set themselves up as teachers without being lawfully appointed to that office, or properly qualified for it, and who were in-

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[2] *When I went into Macedonia.*] πορευομενος. So all copies and versions. One copy of Hilary reads *cum ires Macedoniam,* when you were going to Macedonia. *q. d.* When I set out from Ephesus you intended a voyage to Macedonia; at my intreaty you remained at Ephesus. At any rate this epistle could not have been written upon that journey to Macedonia, which is mentioned by Luke, Acts xx., and it is very improbable that it should have been deferred till after the apostle's release from his first imprisonment. A more probable period than either is assigned in the Introduction to this epistle, together with the arguments by which that hypothesis is supported: but upon the supposition there maintained, a mistake must have slipped into some very early copy in this sentence. See Griesbach, ed. 2.

[3] *Endless genealogies.*] It is doubted whether the apostle means Jewish genealogies, or the Gnostic fiction of the genealogies of the Æons. Dr. Benson has assigned probable reasons for supposing the latter. Many Jewish philosophers were Gnostics. The apostle would hardly have called Jewish genealogies, fables. He himself boasted of his descent from Abraham.

[4] *Dispensation:*] οικονομιαν. Such is the reading of the best authorities. The received text reads οικοδομιαν, *edification.* See Griesbach.

Ch. I. Ver. 4. clined to impose upon their brethren the observance of the Jewish ritual, not to presume to teach a doctrine so different from that pure and spiritual Christianity which I had taught them; and particularly that they should not pay the least regard to the lying legends of Jewish rabbis, or to those intricate genealogies and unintelligible speculations which might supply arguments for perpetual wrangling, but could contribute nothing to the credit or the diffusion of that new and heavenly dispensation, which is appointed by God as the object of our Christian faith.

3. The design of the apostle's instruction is to promote universal benevolence, while the crude doctrines of the false teachers only led to frivolous and unintelligible disputes, ver. 5—7.

5. *Now the purpose of that charge*[1] *is love, out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and undissembled faith.*

The true doctrine of Christ, which I have inculcated among them, produces love to God and man, together with a tranquil and happy state of mind, which originates in purity of heart, in the testimony of an approving conscience, and a practical faith in the gospel. And because it operates these beneficial effects, I urged you to charge those who usurp the office of teachers, at their peril to teach

[1] *Of that charge:*] *q. d.* which I exhorted you to give to the false teachers, ver. 3. Griesbach includes ver. 5—17 in a parenthesis.

any thing inconsistent with it. And you well know that this instruction was far from being unnecessary. Ch. I. Ver. 5.

From which some having swerved, have turned aside to vain talk; desiring to be teachers of the law, but understanding neither what they say, nor concerning what they so positively affirm. 6. 7.

Some weak and vain persons, losing sight of this main object of evangelical instruction, have taken upon them to teach many foolish and unnecessary things; imposing many rites and ceremonies upon the believers in Christianity, which are of no use in themselves, and which the author of our religion has not enjoined. Nor are these people in fact thoroughly acquainted with that ritual, the observance of which they are so ready to impose; but while they pretend to be teachers of the law, they betray gross ignorance both of its specific injunctions and of its grand design.

4. The law is useful as a restraint upon vice, but not as a ritual obligatory upon believers, ver. 8—11.

Now we know that the law is excellent, if a man use it agreeably to its design[2]. 8.

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[2] *Agreeably to its design.*] νομιμως, *lawfully.* "agreeably to the purpose for which the law was given, and without imposing the observance of its ceremonies on believers in the gospel." Newcome. Dr. Priestley observes, that "lest it should be imagined Paul meant to undervalue the law, he expressly declares that that was not his intention, and shows what was the proper

Ch. I. Ver. 8. I am far from being an enemy to the Mosaic law, as my slanderers maliciously represent. I acknowledge it to be of divine original; and that at the time when it was delivered, and to the people for whom it was designed, it was of great use. And the moral part of it is still obligatory upon all mankind. But let not the ceremonial law, with the additional load of Pharisaic tradition, usurp the place of the gospel.

9. *Knowing this, that against a just person there is no law in force.*

Believers in the Christian religion are justified by faith without the works of the law; they are brought into a state of privilege and hope by the simple act of belief in Christ, and by making a public profession of their belief independently of a compliance with the Mosaic ritual. And if they live up to their profession and their future expectations, they are not obnoxious to that sentence which the moral law denounces upon all impenitent offenders. These are principles which we must settle in our own minds, when we take into consideration the present extent and obligation of the law of Moses.

—9. *But* laws are made *for the lawless and the unruly, for the impious and the wicked, for the unholy and profane, for parricides and murderers,*

10. *for fornicators, for sodomites, for man-stealers,*

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end of the law with respect to the moral, which was the most important use of it; namely, to be a restraint upon vice and wickedness, several kinds of which he here enumerates."

for liars, for perjured persons; and if there be any other thing contrary to that wholesome doctrine of the glorious gospel of the blessed[1] *God, which has been committed to my trust.* Ch. I. Ver. 11.

Laws are made to prevent crimes, by denouncing condign punishment upon those who are guilty: of these some are atrocious offences against society and the public peace, and demand the severest cognizance of the civil magistrate. Others are offences of a more private nature: violations of good morals, infringements upon that delicacy of character, which the gospel requires, that glorious gospel of which I have the honour to be an authorized preacher and an apostle, and which enjoins the strictest purity of heart and life, without which none can be admitted into the blissful presence of God. These crimes, though highly blameable, cannot always be arraigned before an earthly tribunal; but they do not escape the notice of omniscience. And the sentence, which the moral law of God passes upon these offences, shall be as certainly executed in due season upon the obdurate and impenitent, as the punishment denounced upon crimes of the greatest notoriety, and the most horrible aggravation.

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[1] *Blessed God.*] μακαριε, *blessed, perfect in happiness.* Wakefield renders it *holy,* and refers to Hesychius.

SECTION II.

Ch. I. *THE APOSTLE, after having expressed in the warmest terms his devout admiration and gratitude for his conversion to the faith, and his call to the apostolic office, renews the charge of fidelity to Timothy, and warns him of the danger of apostatizing from the faith.* Ch. i. 12—20.

1. The apostle, having mentioned that he was intrusted to preach the gospel, takes occasion to express his great thankfulness for his conversion to the Christian faith, and his call to the apostolic office, ver. 12—14.

Ver. 12. *Now I return thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me ability*[1], *that he accounted me*
13. *faithful, having put* me *into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I acted ignorantly in* my state of *unbelief.*

I am intrusted to preach this glorious gospel; and truly, when I recollect this fact in all its circumstances, I am lost in admiration and gratitude for the great honour conferred upon one so unde-

[1] *Who has given me ability.*] ενδυναμωσαντι με, *who granteth me strength.* Wakefield.—*q. d.* who supplied me with miraculous powers, &c. "by the co-operation of his spirit." Newcome.

serving of it. And first of all, I thank my Master Christ Jesus, who is the head of the church, and from whom I have received those gifts and powers by which I am qualified for the discharge of the apostolic office, that he should regard me, I will not say as worthy of this honourable station, but rather as one who would discharge the duties of the office with fidelity, zeal, and courage, and who would not by any mean and temporizing conduct betray the confidence reposed in me. It is truly wonderful that he should have vouchsafed thus to honour me, who before my conversion distinguished myself by the most malignant opposition to the Christian name; being a reviler of Jesus and of his doctrine, a spiteful persecutor of his disciples, treating them in the most insolent and injurious manner. Yet, great as my offence was, it was forgiven; because my misconduct arose from an error of judgement, rather than from malevolence of heart. In my unhappy state of unbelief, I acted ignorantly, being seriously persuaded in my wretched, misguided conscience, that I ought to do all that I did against the doctrine and the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. Ch. I. Ver. 13.

And the favour of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, together with[2] *that faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.* 14.

[2] *Together with:*] *q. d.* in producing that faith in Christ and love to him which then became the ruling principles in my breast. "*Faith* is opposed to St. Paul's former unbelief, and *love* to his former spirit of persecution." Newcome.

Ch. I. Ver. 14. The mercy and goodness of Christ went far beyond the measure of my guilt and folly; and from a bigoted persecuting unbeliever, it transformed me into a humble, charitable, holy, zealous disciple, and preacher of the gospel. The power and grace of Christ wrought an immediate and total change in my views, my principles, my affections, and my conduct; and made me the reverse of all that I had been before.

2. The apostle represents the mercy manifested to him as an encouraging motive to faith and penitence, ver. 15, 16.

15. *It is a certain truth, and worthy of cordial reception*[1], *that Jesus Christ came into the world to*
16. *save sinners, of whom I have been*[2] *the chief. Nevertheless, for this cause I obtained mercy; that in me, as chief*[3], *Jesus Christ might display the utmost forbearance, as an example to those who should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life.*

There is no doctrine more true, more important, or more worthy of being cordially and universally received and professed, than this, That Jesus Christ came into the world to bring all mankind, whether the Jews who had forfeited their privileges, or the

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[1] *Of cordial reception.*] παση̃ς αποδοχη̃ς. Raphelius observes, that πα̃ς is used for *summus*." Newcome. "all joyful acceptation." Wakefield.

[2] *I have been.*] An instance of ειμι expressing past time.

[3] *In me, as chief.*] πρωτῳ. Benson supposes the apostle means to say, he was the first blasphemer and persecutor who had been converted since the effusion of the spirit. But this, Macknight observes, is contrary to Acts ii. 33—41, vi. 7.

heathen who never possessed them, into a state of privilege and of hope, rescuing them from the bondage of the Mosaic law, and from the impure rites of idol worship, and introducing them into the light, the liberty, the peace, and privilege of the gospel state. Ch. I. Ver. 16.

Of those who are thus benefited by the gospel, none was ever more unworthy than myself, who was not only an unbeliever, but a furious persecutor of the church; who had, therefore, forfeited all claims to mercy: yet my honoured Master singled me out as the object of his compassion; and this he did, not from any merit of my own, but that my example might be an encouragement to others, blind and furious as myself, to repent and reform, and embrace the gospel, in humble dependance upon that mercy which, having been extended to such an one as I was, will never be denied to any sincere penitent; and which will advance to a happy and immortal life every one who believes and obeys the gospel.

3. The apostle, excited by the recollection of this distinguishing goodness, ascribes the glory of all to God, ver. 17.

Now to the ruler of the ages[4], *the incorruptible*, 17.

[4] *To the ruler of the ages.*] τω βασιλει των αιωνων, "unto the king of the several ages or dispensations, viz. the age before the *law*, that under the *law*, and that under the *Messiah*, or the last age. Unto him that disposed these three grand dispensations, so as that one should make way for another, he here very pertinently ascribes praise. Lewis Capel informs us

Ch. I. Ver. 17. *the invisible, the only God*[1], *be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Mercy like this can never be sufficiently adored and praised. And though I acknowledge my great obligation to Jesus Christ, who was the immediate instrument of communicating these invaluable blessings, and conferring upon me these distinguishing honours, I do not forget that they are all ultimately to be traced to the free and infinite mercy of his God and our God. To Him therefore who is the author of all the dispensations of mercy to mankind, whether the patriarchal, the Mosaic, or this new dispensation under the Messiah, which comprehends all his rational offspring; to Him who ever lives to fulfill his purposes of mercy, and who is ever really, though invisibly, present with his faithful servants; to Him who alone is God, possessed of every perfection natural and moral, with-

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that this was one of the Jewish doxologies, *Let God be blessed for ever, who hath created this age and the age to come;* and that expressions like this are frequent in the Jewish liturgy." Benson. See also Macknight. "Now unto the king of the ages, to God, uncorruptible, invisible," &c. Wakefield. "Now to the king eternal, immortal, invisible." Newcome.

The apostle had been expressing his gratitude to Christ, who had appeared in person to convert him to the faith, to invest him with the office of an apostle, to endue him with the necessary powers and qualifications, and who was with him to superintend and direct him in the whole course of his ministry. But he does not forget that Christ himself is no more than an instrument in the hands of God; whose supreme agency he here acknowledges, and to whom, as the Lord of all, the only God, he renders divine honours.

[1] *The only God.*] The received text reads, "the only *wise* God;" but the word σοφῷ is wanting in the best manuscripts, and is dropped by Griesbach and Newcome.

out an equal and without a rival; to Him be honour and praise through every dispensation, and to the end of time. Amen. Ch. I. Ver. 17.

4. The apostle now resumes his charge to Timothy, whom he urges to fidelity and resolution, and warns against the dangers of apostasy, ver. 18—20.

This charge[2] *I commit to thee, O son Timothy, agreeably to prior solemn declarations*[3] *concerning thee, that according to them*[4] *thou mayest maintain a good warfare.* 18.

My dear Timothy, my beloved son in the faith,

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[2] *This charge.*] παραγγελιαν, ver. 3. Timothy remained to give a charge, ver. 3; the design of this charge was to promote faith and love, ver. 5: the apostle now proceeds to give his charge in detail.

[3] *Prior solemn declarations.*] Mangey conjectures επι σε, *concerning thee.* See Bowyer. Wakefield reads with the Æthiopic, επι με, *concerning me;* but gives it up as unintelligible. Προφητειας may express something which has been said before: meaning perhaps nothing more than either the high character given of Timothy by some eminent Christians at Derbe and Lystra, before the apostle admitted him as an associate (see Acts xvi. 2), or the solemn admonition, which had been addressed to him previously to entering upon his mission. Dr. Priestley, and many others, understand it of "some prophecy, pointing out Timothy as a proper person to be intrusted with the preaching of the gospel;" and adds, "it is evident from other circumstances that such a spirit of prophecy was then in the church." It does not, however, appear necessary to suppose that there was any thing supernatural in the case. It is generally allowed that the prophets did not always speak from inspiration.

[4] *According to them.*] εν αυταις· *i. e.* in conformity to the testimonies borne to your character by the prophets or teachers of Derbe and Lystra. In this sense, says Dr. Benson, εν is used, Matt. vi. 7. Comp. 1 Tim. iv. 14.

Ch. I. Ver. 18. when I was about to engage you as my associate at Lystra, I inquired your character of the believers there, and was then assured by some of the most eminently gifted teachers of the church that I should find in you a zealous advocate of the pure gospel, and a determined opposer of the corrupt doctrine of the Jewish teachers, and they accompanied their commendations of your character with earnest exhortations to the same effect. I charge you, therefore, my beloved friend, to fulfill the expectations which have been raised concerning you: be strenuous in your opposition to those who would corrupt the gospel of Christ, and approve yourself a valiant champion of Christian truth.

19. *Retaining faith and a good conscience, which* latter *some having rejected, have also suffered shipwreck of their faith.*

There are two things which you must, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, strenuously retain. The first is, uncorrupted faith, the Christian faith in its original purity, unmixed with heathen philosophy on the one hand, and with Jewish fables and ceremonies on the other. The next is, a clear conscience, a pure heart, and a virtuous life, without which faith will be of little use. And indeed there are some unhappy persons, who, having first polluted their consciences by their vices, and having lived in habitual contempt and neglect of the moral precepts of the gospel, have, as a natural consequence, rejected the belief of it altogether, and represented the whole as a fable and a fraud; or at least, while

they have retained the profession of the Christian religion, they have subverted its grand design by teaching doctrines unfavourable to good morals as the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. Ch. I. Ver. 19.

Of which number *are Hymenæus and Alexander*[1], *whom I have delivered over to Satan, that they may be taught not to blaspheme.* 20.

Of this misconduct there are two notorious instances at Ephesus, with which you are probably acquainted; namely, Hymenæus and Alexander. These were men of bad principles and immoral lives; and for that reason they rejected or corrupted the gospel, and gave me great trouble during my residence at Ephesus. But, to prevent fur-

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[1] *Hymenæus and Alexander.*] Alexander was a coppersmith, 2 Tim. iv. 14, once it seems a professor of the Christian religion; but being of an immoral character, he was by the apostle, together with Hymenæus, "delivered over to Satan," that is, *excommunicated*, see 1 Cor. v. 5. After which they apostatized from the Christian faith, denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, 2 Tim. ii. 17; and became, Alexander especially, bitter enemies of the apostle Paul. At the time of the riot at Ephesus, Alexander was urged on by the Jews, Acts xix. 33, probably to inflame the multitude still more against the apostle and his followers: but the populace, finding that he was a Jew, probably confounded him with the Christians, and would not give him a hearing. These men are mentioned again in the second epistle: Hymenæus as persisting in his mischievous errors and corrupting others, Alexander as the personal enemy of the apostle himself, and neither of them reformed by the discipline inflicted.

If, as many believe, the apostle delivered these men into the hands of the devil to cure them of blasphemy, he certainly sent them to a bad school. To suppose, that delivering to Satan was the miraculous infliction of disease, is perfectly gratuitous. The apostle disowned them, and excluded them from the Christian community.

Ch. I. Ver. 20. ther mischief, I thought fit to exclude them from the Christian community, and have consigned them to the society of those unbelievers and idolaters whose company they love, and whose works they practise. I shall be sincerely glad if this public stigma which has been fixed upon them, may be a means of bringing them to serious consideration, and of inducing them to repent of that malignant opposition which they now make to the doctrine of Christ, and to the preachers of the gospel.

SECTION III.

Ch. II. *THE APOSTLE enjoins general intercession, as an expression of benevolence acceptable to God, who wills that all mankind, without distinction, should participate in the blessings of the gospel.* Ch. ii. 1—7.

1. The apostle enjoins intercession for all mankind, and especially for magistrates and men in exalted stations, as an acceptable expression of universal good-will. Ch. ii. 1—4.

Ver. 1. *I exhort, therefore, in the first place, that supplications*[1], *prayers, intercessions* and *thanksgivings, be made*[2] *for all men*[3].

[1] *Supplications.*] "By δεησεις I understand *petitions* for a supply of our wants; by προσευχας, *vows* to the Almighty in return; by εντευξεις, *meditations,* and that intercourse which

Ch. II. Ver. 1.

I know but too well the narrow spirit which prevails among my countrymen, who regard themselves as the favourites of heaven, and look upon the Gentile world with contempt and abhorrence, as more deserving of anathemas than benedictions. I fear lest the same spirit should be infused by false teachers into the converts to the Christian faith. But let it be deeply impressed upon the mind of every disciple of Christ, that the religion of Jesus is a law of kindness and universal good-will; and therefore I strictly charge you, that whenever the believers at Ephesus assemble together for religious worship, prayers should be offered up for all mankind, deprecations of impending calamities, and petitions for necessary blessings; also that thanksgivings should be rendered to God for his great goodness to all his reasonable creatures.

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passes between God and our own souls." Bishop Barrington, Bowyer. "δεησεις, *deprecations*; προσευχας, *prayers for good things*; εντευξεις, *intercessions*; ευχαριστιας, *thanksgivings*. I do not apprehend," saith Benson, "that the apostle was very solicitous nicely to distinguish between supplications, prayers, and intercessions, but used them all to intimate, that he would not only have them praise God, but put up all sorts of petitions for all men, by what name soever these petitions were usually called."

[2] *Be made.*] ποιεισθαι. Bishop Bull understood this of a direction to compose liturgies for the church at Ephesus: "an instance of prejudice which," Dr. Doddridge says, "almost made him weep."

[3] *All men.*] This exhortation is almost universally understood to refer to the narrow-mindedness of the Jews; who in the first captivity were taught to pray for those in whose land they were captives, see Ezra vi. 10; but under the Romans were unwilling to pray for their oppressors, and constantly stirring up sedition.

Ch. II. Ver. 2. *For kings, and all who are in high stations, that we*[1] *may lead a peaceable and quiet life in all piety and virtue.*

The enemies of the gospel will be desirous of representing you as seditious and disloyal; they will intentionally confound you with those zealots of the law, whose obstinacy in refusing to pray for their heathen governors gives great and just offence. But let the Christians at Ephesus be exhorted to pray for the emperor, and for all subordinate civil authorities, whose office it is to preserve the public peace. And let them recommend both their persons and their government to the divine protection and blessing, that so they may give no just occasion of offence, and that, by their dutiful submission to the civil power, they may obtain that protection from it which will ensure peace and security, and will enable them to pass their lives in the exercise of piety and the practice of virtue, so as to command universal respect.

3. *For this* is *right and acceptable in the sight of*
4. *God our Saviour, who willeth that all men should be saved*[2]*, and come to the acknowledgement of the truth.*

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[1] *That we may lead.*] Mr. Wakefield, upon the authority of the Arabic, renders it, "that *they* may go through a quiet and peaceful life with all veneration and respect." This authority is hardly sufficient for changing the received text, which admits of so good and pertinent a sense. Beza proposes to omit the point at ὄντων. *q. d.* all placed in authority for this end, that we may lead a peaceable life. See Bowyer.

[2] *Who willeth that all men should be saved.*] This expression

Ch. II. Ver. 4.

This spirit of pious philanthropy is honourable to the Christian religion; and it is highly pleasing to God, who has by his great mercy in the gospel delivered us from the bondage of idolatry and vice, and from the narrow spirit of the Jewish œconomy: who is also the common parent of the whole human race; whose good pleasure it is, that the gospel should be published to all mankind without distinction, and that the great deliverance we have experienced should be extended to every individual, of every nation, who will accept of the gracious offers of salvation; who has also commissioned the apostles and other teachers of the Christian doctrine, to make the gospel known through the whole habitable world, that all may be instructed in its truth, and participate in its blessings.

2. The apostle, in pursuance of this argument, asserts the universal importance of the Christian doctrine, which he was specially appointed to preach to the Gentiles, ver. 5—7.

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is explained by the succeeding clause, that "they should come to the acknowledgement of the truth:" to be *saved*, therefore, is to become professors of the gospel, by which they were saved from idolatry on the one hand and Judaism on the other. It has no reference to the happiness of a future life any further than the profession of the gospel might be the means of virtue. See Newcome. Dr. Macknight well explains it, "who commands all men to be saved from heathenish ignorance and Jewish prejudices." When it is said that *God wills they should be saved*, the meaning is, that it is his pleasure that the gospel should be preached to all, without distinction of Jew or Gentile.

Ch. II. Ver. 5. *For* there is *one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*[1].

There is no reason why one nation or class of men should regard themselves as entitled to greater privileges than another; for there is one God, the benevolent and impartial parent of all mankind, the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, and equally disposed to promote the happiness of all his creatures. And to manifest his love to all men equally, of whatever nation or country, he has deputed one person only as the chief messenger of his will. He has not sent into the world one prophet to the Jews and another to the heathen: much less has he commissioned an angel or celestial spirit to communicate his will to one people, and a frail human being to teach another: but he has appointed his faithful servant Jesus Christ, a man like ourselves, subject to all the innocent weaknesses and infirmities of human nature, but amply qualified for the discharge of the high commission with which he is intrusted, to be the instructor of all men, whether Jews or heathen, and the great medium of divine communication.

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[1] *The man Christ Jesus.*] Not the *God*-man, nor any the least intimation that he was any thing more than a man. A *mediator* is one who is the medium of divine communication, as Moses was to the Israelites: it does not at all imply the notion of *atonement* or *propitiation*. "Had the apostle," saith Dr. Priestley, "thought him to be a being of a higher nature than that of man, it cannot be supposed but that in this place more especially, he would have denominated him by that higher rank, whatever it was; and especially if he had conceived him to be so great a being as the Maker of man and all things."

Who gave himself a ransom[2] *for all men, the testimony*[3] reserved *for its proper time.* Ch. II. Ver. 6.

It was necessary for the accomplishment of the purposes of divine providence, that the distinguished person who was appointed to be the medium of divine communication with all mankind, as Moses was with the Jewish nation, should suffer a public death; and to this catastrophe Jesus of Nazareth, who was anointed and set apart for this honourable office, voluntarily and cheerfully submitted. And this sacrifice which he made of his life for the benefit of all mankind, may be called a ransom, a price of redemption from bondage, a means of deliverance to the heathen from the thral-

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[2] *A ransom for all.*] αντιλυτρον. Estius saith, that this was a word used when life was given for life. It signifies in general, the means of deliverance. Mr. Wakefield renders it *deliverance.* Benson understands αντιλυτρον as λυτρον, the price put down for the ransom of a captive. One great mistake on this subject is, that the apostle is understood to speak of deliverance from sin and its punishment, when he only means, deliverance from the yoke of heathenism and the ceremonial law.

[3] *The testimony.*] μαρτυριον. I adopt Benson's interpretation: "an eminent and stedfast witness of the truth in the age in which it was appointed that he should live and die." Benson also has some good remarks upon the voluntary submission of Christ to suffering and death.

The Alexandrine MS. wants το μαρτυριον. *q. d.* "who gave himself a ransom at the proper time." The Clermont and other copies read ου το κ. τ. λ. *q. d.* "the testimony *to which* was given at the proper time." One copy reads το μυστηριον, *the mystery, i. e.* the call of the Gentiles; which Beza and Wakefield prefer, but decline to adopt against the authority of all the versions. Castalio and Bengelius connect this clause with the succeeding: *q. d.* "a doctrine to be borne witness to in due season, of which I am appointed a preacher." Bowyer, Griesbach.

Ch. II. Ver. 6. dom of idolatry and vice, and to the Jew from the yoke of the law; for by this event the Jewish covenant was abrogated, and the new and universal dispensation of grace and mercy was introduced. The death of Jesus, the mediator, may also be regarded as a signal testimony to the truth of his doctrine, and to the divinity of his mission. And this important event took place at the season appointed in the counsels of infinite wisdom, a time which was upon the whole the fittest and the best; after it had been made sufficiently apparent, that the light of nature and the speculations of philosophy were not of themselves capable of enlightening and reforming the world.

7. *Of which* doctrine[1] *I have been appointed a preacher, and an apostle,* (*I speak the truth*[2], *I speak not falsely,*) *an instructor of the Gentiles in faith and truth.*

I again repeat it in justification of my own conduct, and as a public warrant to you, Timothy, in following my directions at Ephesus, and in teach-

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[1] *Of which* doctrine.] εἰς ὁ, *as concerning.* Newcome; who remarks, that the latter clause in ver. 6, and the beginning of ver. 7, may be rendered, "*for* a testimony *to the world* at the proper season: *i. e. when the fullness of time came.* For which testimony I have been appointed, &c."

[2] *I speak the truth.*] The received text adds, "in Christ:" these words are wanting in the Alexandrine, Clermont, and other copies, and in the Syriac, Vulgate, and other versions, and are dropped by Griesbach, Newcome, and Wakefield. Dr. Owen says, "As they occur, Rom. ix. 1. without any mark of reprobation, I see no reason why they should be thought commentitious here." Bowyer. Nor would they be rejected here, if they were supported by equal authority.

ing that doctrine which you have learned from me, that of this gracious dispensation, thus attested and ratified by the death of Jesus Christ, I have the honour to be constituted by him a teacher and an apostle, a publisher of the doctrine which he first taught, and a witness of his resurrection from the state of death. And what is still more astonishing, and to a prejudiced and narrow-minded Jew may appear wholly incredible, which nevertheless I solemnly aver to be a real and a serious truth, I am authorized and required by Christ, who is my master, and the director of my missionary labours, to be an instructor of the Gentiles in the purity and simplicity of that faith, the profession of which will introduce them into a state of privilege and hope, and a practical regard to which will ensure their ultimate and everlasting felicity. Ch. II. Ver. 7.

SECTION IV.

The apostle requires that the public offices of worship should be conducted by men only, forbidding women to officiate in public, and enjoining upon them at all times to observe that decorum of dress and behaviour, which becomes the modesty and delicacy of the sex. Ch. ii. 8—15.

1. The apostle requires that the public offices of religion should in all places be conducted by men, ver. 8.

Ch. II. Ver. 8. *I direct therefore that the men pray*[1] *in every place*[2], *lifting up holy hands*[3], *without wrath or disputing*[4].

Being appointed by Jesus Christ an apostle in his church, with full powers to teach his doctrine, and to regulate its external concerns, and having exhibited to the church at Ephesus ample evidence of this authority thus intrusted to me, I now proceed to mention some regulations, which, for the sake of decency, good order and general edification, I require to be observed by the churches, and which in my absence I delegate to you full authority to carry into effect. And in particular I enjoin, that the religious services of the Christian society shall be conducted by the men only, who are better qualified to speak in mixed assemblies than persons of the other sex. Let this rule be universally observed; and let public prayers be offered up to God, wherever it may be convenient to a society of believing worshipers to assemble. Under the Christian dispensation there is no distinction of places any more

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[1] *That the men pray.*] A direction that men only should conduct public devotion. See Benson.

[2] *In every place.*] An allusion to the Jews; who limited the presence of God to the temple and the synagogue. Vide Benson.

[3] *Holy hands.*] An allusion to the custom of washing hands before prayer.

[4] *Without wrath or disputing.*] "*q. d.* without resentment of Christians to persecutors; of Jews and Judaizers to Gentiles." Benson. "*Without disputings* about the admission of Gentiles into the church, and the universal obligation of the law, or about Jewish fables and genealogies." Vide Benson and Newcome.

than of times; and prayers offered up from the meanest edifice, or from the open fields, are as acceptable to God as if they were presented in the synagogue, the temple, or any other consecrated edifice, however splendid. One qualification is indispensable: namely, that the hands which are held up to God should not only be externally but morally pure; and that the heart from which these prayers proceed should be free from all malevolent passions, and especially from religious bigotry; from that angry spirit, which is too often generated and fomented by disputes concerning times, and places, and modes of worship; and from that rancour which those who entertain different opinions upon these subjects are too ready to indulge with respect to each other. Ch. II. Ver. 8.

2. The apostle recommends to the women simplicity and decorum in dress, and forbids them to assume the office of public teachers, ver. 9—12.

I *likewise* require *that the women should adorn themselves with decent apparel*[5], *with modesty and discretion. Not* so much[6] *with braided hair, or* 9.

[5] *Decent apparel.*] "suitable in point of decorum, considering their station in life, and what becomes them as Christians." Newcome.

[6] *Not* so much.] Literally, "not with braided hair (or curls), &c. but with good works." Archbishop Newcome well explains the text, "not so much with, &c. and not only with, &c. See John vi. 27; Eph. vi. 12." It is a well known Hebrew form of expressing the comparative degree. The apostle could not mean to forbid Christian women to dress in a manner becoming their rank and station in life; or to represent curling the hair

Ch. II. Ver. 10. *gold, or pearls, or costly array, as with good works, which becometh women professing reverence for God*[1].

As some of the new converts are persons of rank and fortune, I forbid not women of their quality and station from wearing that apparel which is usual and decorous. Let them, if they please, upon proper occasions, assume the ornaments of dress; but let them never exceed the limits of modesty and discretion, nor let them affect splendour in their attire when they assemble with their fellow Christians for the worship of God. Above all things let them remember, that the most precious ornaments of the female sex, and especially of those who, having renounced idolatry, profess to be worshipers of the true God, and disciples of Jesus Christ, consist in acts of charity and beneficence. The habit of doing good is a glorious robe, which well becomes persons of every age and condition of life, and especially those who are blest with affluence. It will never tarnish, and never wear out.

11. *Let the woman receive instruction in silence*[2]

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or ornaments of gold and jewellery as in themselves immoral. Christianity lays no stress upon things indifferent: what the apostle forbids is foolish vanity in dress, expense beyond what persons can really or conveniently afford, and which will cramp their benevolence; an affectation of finery which is inconsistent with simplicity and unbecoming their station in life; and in a word, a solicitous attention to external appearance, to the neglect of piety, charity, and good works.

[1] *Professing reverence,*] or, worship of God; *i. e.* the true God, distinct from idols. See Newcome and Wakefield.

[2] *In silence.*] "in the church. 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35." Newcome.

with entire submission. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but require her[3] *to remain in silence.* Ch. II. Ver. 12.

It does not agree with the delicacy of the female sex to put themselves forward as public teachers. Though some are inclined to encourage this practice, it is what I disapprove, and in virtue of my apostolic authority I expressly forbid. Let the women confine themselves to the duties of their proper sphere, and let them not intrude into the province of the men, who by the greater vigour of their constitution, and the firmer tone of their organs, are better qualified for public speaking. Let the women therefore attend as hearers in respectful silence; and if they desire further information, let them ask in private of those who are able and willing to communicate instruction.

3. The apostle enforces the injunction by arguments borrowed from the Mosaic account of the creation and fall of man, and concludes the subject with a promise of blessings to the virtuous, ver. 13—15.

For Adam was first formed, and Eve afterwards. 13.

The book of Genesis informs us that Eve was made for Adam, and not Adam for Eve; and therefore the woman should acknowledge the superiority of the man.

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[3] *But* require her.] See a similar construction ch. iv. 3.

Ch. II. Ver. 14. *Also Adam was not seduced, but the woman being seduced was* guilty *of transgression*[1].

The understanding of Eve was easily imposed upon by the smooth and subtle discourse of the serpent, and she was therefore persuaded to eat the forbidden fruit. But Adam fell in consequence of his attachment to Eve, not because his understanding was deluded. The woman therefore should be in subjection to the man, as possessing a superior intellect, and being more capable of discerning between right and wrong[2].

The apostle concludes this head of discourse

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[1] *Was* guilty *of transgression.*] So Newcome. Wakefield gives a different version: "Adam was not deceived, but became a transgressor through the error of the woman."

[2] *Between right and wrong.*] Such is the nature of the apostle's argument; which, to say the truth, is of no great weight, and will hardly bear him out in his conclusions, any further than as it was an address to the professed principles of those who were zealots for the Mosaic ritual. That it is proper for men to take the lead in the public services of Christian assemblies is obviously just, and will be generally allowed. And the apostle had undoubted authority to enjoin a decorous silence upon the female sex. It is likewise sufficiently evident that it is equally indecorous for the woman to usurp authority over the man in the affairs which properly fall within his department. But that degrading subjection of the female sex which was common in the East, and which the apostle seems to favour, is neither consistent with wisdom, with justice, nor with the liberal spirit of modern times. And if the authenticity, and the literal interpretation of what is commonly called the Mosaic account of the creation, and the fall of man, should be admitted, which are very problematical, the apostle's argument would still be very precarious. If the priority of Adam's creation proves his superiority to Eve, the priority of the creation of brutes would prove their superiority to Adam. And if Adam knowingly violated the command of God, his folly was surely far greater than that of Eve, who had been imposed upon by the serpent.

with the promise of blessing to the pious and obedient. Ch. II.

Nevertheless[3], *she shall be preserved in childbearing, if they continue*[4] *in faith and love and holiness with soberness of mind.* Ver. 15.

Though the inferiority of the woman is thus established, and though she was condemned to a severe penalty in consequence of the Fall, yet she shall be in some measure redeemed from the curse; and the pains and sorrows of childbirth, if not removed,

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[3] *Nevertheless*, &c.] An extremely difficult text. Newcome suspects τῆς τεκνογονιας to be an interpolation, or marginal reading crept into the text; but he owns the supposition is unsupported by authority. The sense given in the paraphrase is the most common, and upon the whole the most probable. It is adopted by Locke, Benson, and Newcome. Locke, on Rom. vii. 5, cites several texts in which δια has the force of *in*, or *during*. viz. Rom. iv. 11; 2 Cor. v. 10; Eph. iii. 6. So the Greeks say, δι' ἡμερας *during the day*, δια νυκτος *during the night*.— It is not indeed literally true, that Christian females are relieved from the sufferings and dangers of child-bearing: but the practice of Christian virtue is the best preparative for suffering, and affords the best support under it. Rosenmuller renders the verse: "*Consequetur autem salutem cum procreatis liberis, si permanserint in fide, et amore, et sanctitate vitæ cum temperantia;*" she shall be saved with her children, if they continue in faith and love, &c. He observes, the Syriac renders τεκνογονια, *children;* that this translation preserves the construction; and that δια with a genitive, as is well known, is sometimes put for συν, *with*. See Rom. ii. 27. iv. 11. *q. d.* The woman and her children shall be saved, if they are well educated and practise virtue. Mr. Wakefield's translation is similar to that of Rosenmuller: "notwithstanding, their offspring will be saved, if they continue in faith, and love, and sanctity with sobermindedness." Some understand the passage as referring to Christ, the promised seed. But this is an arbitrary interpretation.

[4] *If they continue.*] "See a like change of number Psalm cxxvii. 5." Newcome.

Ch. II. Ver. 15. shall at least be mitigated to those who have learned to bear them with a christian spirit, and who adorn their profession by the practice of christian virtue.

SECTION V.

Ch. III. *THE APOSTLE, to assist Timothy in the choice of proper persons for ecclesiastical offices, describes the qualifications requisite in those who are appointed to officiate as bishops or superintendants in the church.* Ch. iii. ver. 1—7.

1. He represents the episcopal office as very honourable, ver. 1.

Ver. 1. *This* is *a true observation*[1], *If any man be earnestly desirous*[2] *of the episcopal office, he desireth an honourable employment.*

Many are eager to be appointed bishops or superintendants in the church; some may perhaps be prompted by a mean ambition of superiority and fancied pre-eminence; some may not be sufficiently apprized of the importance of the office, of the various duties that are attached to it, or of the many qualifications requisite to the faithful, honourable

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[1] *This* is *a true observation.*] Literally, "This is a faithful or credible saying." This clause is added to the end of the preceding chapter by Markland and Wakefield. See Bowyer.

[2] *Earnestly desirous.*] ορεγεται. Vide Macknight. Dr. Priestley strongly recommends reviving the office of elders in dissenting churches, as the only proper way to support discipline.

and successful discharge of it; while some, I doubt not, have just views, and are influenced by the best motives. They do not look up to it as to an office of ease, of emolument, or of power, but as a post of labour, of danger, and of usefulness. But whatever be the views and motives of the respective candidates, it is a certain fact, that he who is ambitious of the episcopal office is ambitious of a very honourable and very important employment; an employment, which, in the present critical situation of the church at Ephesus, will require consummate prudence and sagacity, will demand constant vigilance and activity, will expose its possessors to imminent perils, but which, if faithfully and wisely discharged, will be productive of great honour to himself and advantage to the church. It will be his business, in connexion with his colleagues and fellow-labourers, to instruct the ignorant, to preserve the doctrine of the church pure and uncorrupted, to resist the encroachments of the false teachers, to maintain good order and discipline, to warn the unruly, to dismiss from the Christian community those who cannot otherwise be reclaimed, to keep the church in unity, holiness and peace, to preclude every just occasion of offence to unbelievers, and to maintain a fair and honourable reputation. Ch. III. Ver. 1.

2. Having thus stated the importance of the office, he proceeds to describe the qualifications requisite for the honourable and successful discharge of it, ver. 2—7.

Ch. III. Ver. 2. *A bishop then must be blameless* [1],—As the law required that priests should be free from natural blemishes, the gospel requires that its ministers should be exempt from moral stains, and that their characters should be pure and without reproach;

the husband of one wife [2],—one who is not guilty of polygamy, and who has not, from insufficient reasons, divorced one woman and married another: for these practices, though allowed among the heathen, and tolerated by the Jews, are inconsistent with the superior purity and strictness of the Christian law;

vigilant [3],—guarding against the introduction of error and vice;

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[1] *Blameless.*] ανεπιλημπτον. An allusion to the law of the priesthood. Vide Benson. The directions here are similar to those given to Titus, ch. i. 5, &c. No doubt, therefore, Timothy was left at Ephesus with the same view as Titus was left in Crete. The apostle had not yet resided at Ephesus long enough to organize the church completely to his mind:—a presumption that the epistle was written before the apostle had completed his long three years residence at Ephesus; during which he must have had ample time to organize the Ephesian church. It also furnishes a further presumption, that the letters to Timothy and Titus were written at no great distance of time from each other. These circumstances countenance the supposition that Paul visited Crete from Ephesus, and that the epistle to Timothy was dated from Crete. That the elders and bishops of Ephesus were the same, is evident from Acts xx. 17—28.

[2] *The husband of one wife.*] See Benson, Newcome, Doddridge. Some infer from hence, that none but a married man might be a bishop; others, that a Christian minister may not marry a second wife. But the interpretation in the commentary seems to be the most rational, and is most generally adopted. How inconsistent is this direction of the apostle with the Popish doctrine of the celibacy of the priests!

[3] *Vigilant.*] νηφαλιον might be rendered *sober* or *temperate*;

self-governed[4],—with a mind well regulated, and free from the domineering influence of turbulent and unruly passions; Ch. III. Ver. 2.

decent[5]—in his outward behaviour, so as not only to avoid giving offence, but to attract esteem and respect by a grave and becoming deportment;

hospitable[6]—to strangers, and particularly to those who are employed as missionaries to propagate the gospel, accommodating them with every thing necessary for their subsistence and comfort, while they remain with him, and supplying them with whatever may be requisite to promote the design of their mission when they depart. The bishop must also be

ready to teach,—being himself well-instructed in the genuine doctrine of the Christian religion; impressed with a strong desire to communicate instruction even to those who are most ignorant, or in the meanest station: and likewise possessing a facility of conveying his ideas in a clear, intelligible and impressive manner;

not addicted to wine, *not a striker*[7];—for these 3.

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but that is mentioned in the next verse. See Macknight and Wakefield.

[4] *Self-governed.*] σωφρονα, *sanæ mentis.* "whose mind is well regulated; one who governs his passions." Macknight.

[5] *Decent.*] κοσμιον, *of comely behaviour.* "The former respects the *inward* man, this the *outward*." Macknight.

[6] *Hospitable.*] "Hospitality was more necessary when there were no public houses." Newcome, Macknight, and Benson.

[7] *Not a striker.*] The word αισχροκερδη, *not greedy of filthy lucre*, which follows in the received text, is omitted in the best manuscripts, and by Griesbach. Dr. Priestley observes, "that it may seem extraordinary that any mention should be made of

Ch. III. Ver. 3. vices are absolutely inconsistent with the meek and holy spirit of the gospel, and are particularly disgusting in the teachers of its sublime doctrine:

but mild, not contentious, not covetous;—not ready to take offence, nor delighting in angry quarrels, but of a peaceable and gentle temper; breathing the spirit of that gospel which he teaches, which contains the joyful message of peace and good-will to men. Nor is it fit that a superintendant of the church should be of an avaricious spirit, eagerly grasping after wealth, and unwilling to employ it to the purposes of benevolence and hospitality;

4. *one who governs his own family well, keeping his children in subjection with all gravity.*

A bishop who is to sustain the rank of a father in the church, must first show that he knows how to exercise with discretion the authority of a father at home. He must govern his own family well, with a prudent mixture of gentleness and resolution, so as to secure the reverence and esteem of his household. And in particular, if he have children, he must have trained them up to habits of good order and respectful obedience.

5. *For if a man know not how to govern his own family, how can he take care of the church of God?*

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such vices as these; and particularly as disqualifications for the office of bishop. It shows that the reform of conduct was the work of time; these facts are inconsistent with the idea of any sudden or miraculous change being wrought in the mind. Men first change their opinion and profession upon proper evidence; and better principles would, when they had time to operate, produce a proper change in heart and life."

If a person, for want of prudence and a proper dignity of character, cannot keep his own family in order; if his children are insolent or disobedient, rude and ungovernable; if he fails in the regulation of that small society, over which his authority is almost absolute, how can it be reasonably expected that he will superintend with discretion the concerns of the church, or maintain order and discipline in a society so much larger, where the tempers and dispositions of the members are so much more various and unmanageable, which is consequently so much more difficult to be governed, and where his authority will be so much less? Ch. III. Ver. 5.

Not one newly converted, lest, being elated, he fall under the condemnation of the accuser[1]. 6.

It would be improper to choose a new convert to exercise an office of high trust and authority in the church, whatever his rank in life, or whatever his qualifications and talents may be; for, to say nothing of the improbability of his being properly instructed in the Christian faith, and of the impropriety of elevating him above other Christians of greater knowledge and experience, it can hardly be doubted that an elevation so sudden and unexpected would inspire too high an opinion of himself, and prompt him to some indiscretion in his language or his conduct; of which the vigilant and

[1] *The accuser.*] διαβολου. The enemies of Christianity, who were ready to propagate reports to the disadvantage of Christians and of the gospel, and to invent calumnies. There is no reason to think that the devil is at all alluded to by the apostle.

Ch. III. Ver. 6. malicious enemies of Christianity would gladly avail themselves to his personal disadvantage, and to that of the church over which he might be chosen to preside.

7. *He must likewise support an honourable character among those who are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the accuser.*

A bishop or superintendant of the church must be a person who has always maintained a good character in the world, who has never been guilty of any notorious vices or indiscretions; so that he may be held in estimation even among unbelievers, and that no one may have any ground to cast reproach upon him. Otherwise, if by any flagrant instance of misconduct he has injured his character, he will never be able to discharge his duty with true satisfaction of mind; his instructions, admonitions and reproofs, will want their due weight and influence; and the enemies of Christianity will either insidiously endeavour to seduce him from the faith, and to draw him again into vice and disgrace; or, by exaggerated reports, and vile insinuations, they will endeavour to blast his character, to injure his usefulness, and to bring the society over which he presides into contempt. So that nothing can be more essential to the usefulness of a superintendant, or a bishop of the church, and to the interest of the community over which he presides, than a clear conscience and an honourable character.

SECTION VI.

The apostle describes the characters and qualifications requisite in those who were candidates for the offices of deacons or deaconesses. Ch. iii. 8—15. Ch. III.

1. The apostle specifies the qualifications of those who were fit to be appointed to the office of deacons, ver. 8—10.

In like manner the deacons must be *grave, not double-tongued*[1], *not addicted to much wine, not greedy of dishonourable gain.* Ver. 8.

As the deacons are chosen to superintend the secular affairs of the church, and occasionally to assist in the office of Christian instruction, great attention should be paid to the characters of those who are appointed to this honourable station.

Like the bishops or elders, they should be men of grave and respectable characters, who are not likely, by any levity of conduct, to expose themselves or their office, their doctrine, or the society whose concerns they are appointed to manage, to contempt. They must also be men of simplicity and sincerity, consistent in their language, not ap-

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[1] *Not double-tongued.*] διλογας, "prone to hollowness and deceit." Newcome.

Ch. III. Ver. 8. plauding men to their faces and condemning them when absent, not teaching one doctrine at one time and another at another, in order to gratify prejudice, to promote their interest, or to gain applause. Neither must they be addicted to intemperance, that degrading vice, nor to mean and dishonourable gain: they must not be of a covetous and mercenary spirit, lest, being intrusted with the funds of the society, they should apply to their own use what is intended for the decent support of the officers of the church or the relief of the poor.

9. *Retaining the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience* [1].

The deacons ought to be well-instructed in the whole doctrine of Christ, but especially in that very interesting discovery which was to former ages an unknown mystery, but which is now made manifest, to the no small discontent and confusion of narrow-minded Jews, but to the unspeakable delight and gratitude of the Gentile believers, that the heathen who is converted to the faith of Christ, shall be admitted to equal rights with the believing Jew, though he may not submit to the bondage of the law. And this great principle he must hold with a

[1] *With a pure conscience.*] Dr. Benson thinks that there is an allusion here to the case of Hymenæus and Alexander, ch. i. Dr. Macknight observes, that "the apostle's direction implies, that he should be both sound in the faith and conscientious in maintaining it." The *mystery of the faith* was the call of the gentiles. A man invited to be a deacon ought both to be convinced of the truth of this doctrine, and courageous in avowing it; and who would, therefore, be impartial in the distribution of the donations of the church, Acts vi. See Benson.

clear conscience: he must not only believe, but profess this important article of the Christian faith; and he must not, in order to avoid the displeasure of Judaizing bigots, suppress the truth of the gospel, and sacrifice the liberty of the Gentile church: nor must he, in the distribution of the donations of the church, show any partiality to the Hebrew above the Gentile convert. Ch. III. Ver. 9.

And let these also be first proved, and then, if irreproachable[2]*, let them take the office of deacon.* 10.

As it is improper to elect a new convert to the office of a bishop or superintendant of the church, it is also inexpedient to appoint such an one to the office of a deacon. Let such officers be chosen from among believers of knowledge and experience who are of considerable standing in the church, men of tried integrity, and whose character is an ornament to their profession. And being publicly nominated, if no objection be alleged against them, and if they appear to be generally approved, let them then assume and exercise the office.

2. The apostle gives similar directions with respect to the qualifications of women who were appointed to the offices of deaconesses, ver. 11.

[2] *Irreprouchable.*] "ανεγκλητοι, *qui non in jus vocari potest propter scelus manifestum.*" Schleusner. *q. d.* against whom, when proposed, no objection can be made. Dr. Macknight observes, that "it was a custom in the church, which obtained probably from the apostolic age, to publish the names of those who were intended for ecclesiastical functions, that if any one had aught to accuse them of, they might show it:" to this custom he supposes an allusion here.

Ch. III. Ver. 11. *In like manner the women*[1] *ought to be grave, not slanderers*[2], *temperate, faithful in all things.*

The same directions which I have given concerning the qualifications of a deacon, I repeat with respect to those women, whom, in the present circumstances of the church, it is expedient to appoint to the office of deaconess: and whose duty it is to visit and instruct those of their own sex, to attend the sick, to relieve the poor, and to entertain strangers. Let the women, who may be selected for this useful office, be grave and decent in their deportment, and free from all unbecoming levity in their behaviour. Let them not be too severe in animadverting upon the failings of others; and, above all things, let them abstain from false and malicious accusations. Let them beware of excess, and vigi-

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[1] *The women.*] The women here mentioned are commonly supposed to be the wives of the deacons; but there is no reason to believe that the apostle would give directions concerning them any more than about the wives of the bishops. It is certain from Rom. xvi. that women exercised the office of deaconesses to those of their own sex in the primitive church, and to these probably the apostle alludes in this place. This was the opinion of Chrysostom and most of the ancient writers, and is well supported by Benson and Macknight. It is also adopted by Newcome. Macknight thinks that πρεσβυτιδες, Tit. ii. 3, 4, were *female elders* appointed to instruct the young of their own sex; 1 Tim. v. 2, 9, 10, the same persons are called *widows*.—He has a pertinent quotation from Clement of Alexandria, to prove that these female teachers were so called; and indeed it is probable that they were chosen from the class of widows.

[2] *Not slanderers.*] διαβολας. "*false accusers.*" See ver. 6, and Ainsworth on Lev. xix. 16, xxi. 7. They were not to slander any body; and especially not to blast the characters of the poor, and so cut them off from the charitable relief of the Christian church." Benson.

lantly guard against the odious habit of intemperance. And as they are intrusted with the public purse for the relief of the poor, the sick, and the stranger, let them discharge this duty with the strictest fidelity, and upon no consideration let them divert the contributions of the church to purposes different from those for which they were designed. Ch. III. Ver. 11.

3. He directs that deacons should be men who govern their own families with discretion, and that, by meritorious exertions in inferior offices, they should qualify themselves for more honourable stations, ver. 12, 13.

Let the deacons be husbands of one wife only, *ruling their children and their own families well.* 12.

For they who have discharged the office of a deacon well, acquire for themselves an honourable rank[3], *and great freedom of speech*[4] *in the faith which* is *in Christ Jesus.* 13.

The directions I gave concerning the bishop I now repeat with respect to the deacons, That no person be appointed to that office who is a polygamist, or who, having divorced his first wife from insufficient reasons, is now married to another. And let those persons be chosen who have previ-

[3] *An honourable rank.*] An excellent step or degree: *i. e.* will be advanced to the higher office of presbyter or bishop. See Macknight, Benson, and Doddridge. *Freedom of speech:* great confidence in persecuting times. See Newcome.

[4] *Great freedom of speech.*] "And in these times of persecution great confidence in asserting and teaching the faith which Christians profess." Newcome.

Ch. III. Ver. 13. ously shown their capacity for discharging the office well, by governing their families with discretion, and by having trained up their children in habits of virtue and filial piety. For if the families of those who are appointed to offices in the church are disorderly and untractable, it reflects discredit upon the heads of those families, and will be a disgrace to the church. And though the rank of a deacon be inferior to that of the bishop or principal teacher, it is nevertheless an office of great respectability, and they who discharge its duties faithfully and well, will be esteemed and honoured by the church, and will in due time probably be advanced to superior stations. And in the mean time the testimony of their conscience, and the esteem in which they are held by wise and good men, will encourage them to teach the doctrine of Christ with manly freedom; and their wholesome doctrine, supported by the excellence of their example, will be crowned with success.

4. This advice he has delivered to regulate the conduct of the evangelist during his own absence from Ephesus, whether for a longer or a shorter interval, ver. 14, 15.

14. *I write these things unto thee in expectation*
15. *of coming to thee very soon*[1]*; but if I delay, that*

[1] *In expectation of coming very soon.*] ταχιον, or, as the Alexandrine and others read, εν ταχει. It is quite impossible that when the apostle set out for Macedonia, Acts xx. after the tumult of Demetrius, intending to visit Corinth, and to

thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, as *a pillar and support of the truth*[2]. Ch. III. Ver. 15.

I am now in a situation, as you very well know, from which I expect speedily to return, and to relieve you from the weight of responsibility which I have imposed upon you. But as I am not my own master, and know not what may happen, lest my absence should be prolonged beyond what I at present purpose or expect, I have written these necessary directions and advices, that you, who, by

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settle the disorders which prevailed in that church, he should have expected to return *speedily* to Ephesus. This, therefore, could not have been the time when he wrote his letter. But if he wrote from Crete, agreeably to the hypothesis which has been proposed in the Introduction, he of course fully expected to return very soon, which would be his justification for having delegated such extraordinary powers to this youthful evangelist. Yet still it was possible that he might be either prevented by his enemies, or restrained by Providence, from returning to Ephesus so soon as he proposed. To provide for this contingency, he writes the letter which contains these particular directions to his young substitute. In this case, however, the apostle appears to have returned as soon as he intended, and to have relieved the evangelist from his burdensome responsibility.

[2] As *a pillar*, &c.] The church is not the "pillar of truth," for it is represented as the temple itself. Somerville, Bengel, Griesbach, and Rosenmuller, end the sentence at ζῶντος. *q.d.* "that thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God. The pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy, great is the mystery," &c. With Benson, Wakefield, Newcome, and others, I have preferred applying the epithets *pillar and ground of truth* to the evangelist himself. See Gal. ii. 9, Rev. iii. 12. There is probably an allusion to the temple of Diana at Ephesus, or to the temple of Jerusalem.

Ch. III. Ver. 15.

sustaining the office of an evangelist, are constituted a pillar of the church, and a main support of Christian truth, may know in what manner to discharge the duties incumbent upon you in the arduous situation which you are now occupying at Ephesus; that, by simplicity of doctrine, and wisdom of conduct, you may indeed approve yourself a firm support and graceful ornament of that holy edifice, which is not, like the temple of Jerusalem, decorated with external splendour, nor, like the celebrated temple of Diana, consecrated to a senseless idol, but which is a spiritual and living temple, dedicated to the living and eternal God. This glorious building is the great body of believers, who are by their profession of the Christian doctrine consecrated to God, whom he claims as his peculiar property, among whom he dwells by the gifts and energies of his holy spirit, and whom, if they are faithful and obedient, he will raise, by his almighty energy, to a new, a glorious, and an endless life.

SECTION VII.

THE APOSTLE, after solemnly enumerating the principal facts upon which the evidence of the divine origin of the Christian religion is founded, proceeds to foretell many circumstances of the grand apostasy, against which he urges the evangelist to put the Ephesians upon their guard. Ch. iii. 16—iv. 7. Ch. III.

1. The apostle distinctly, but briefly, states some of the fundamental facts of the Christian religion, ver. 16.

And without dispute, great is the mystery of religion[1]. *He who*[2] *was manifested in* the *flesh*[3], Ver. 16.

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[1] *The mystery of religion.*] *q. d.* Other religions have their mysteries, but the Christian religion contains a greater mystery than all: viz. that the gospel should be preached to, and received by, the heathen world; for this is what the apostle commonly means by the word *mystery*. See Eph. i. 9, iii. 3; of which he never speaks but with admiration. Ευσεβειαν "*ipsa religio Christiana, quæ pietatem non solum commendat, sed etiam promovet.*" Schleusner.—"The mystery of godliness, or, of *true worship*, is confessedly great. The long concealed and now discovered doctrines of the true religion, which is called ευσεβεια, in opposition to the ασεβεια of the heathen." Newcome.

[2] *He who.*] There are three readings of this passage: ΘΣ, *God*; ΟΣ, *he who*; and Ο, *that which*. The Ephrem manuscript reads ΟΣ, *he who*; and probably the Alexandrine. This is adopted by Griesbach, who observes that ΘΣ and Ο are much more likely to be corrupted from ΟΣ, than *vice versa*. "All the old versions," says Dr. Clarke, (*Doct. of Trin.* No. 88, 89,)

Ch. III. Ver. 16. *was justified by* the *spirit*[4], *appeared to* his *messengers*[5], *was proclaimed to* the *nations*[6], *was*

" have *who* or *which*. Also all the ancient Fathers, though the copies of many of them have it now in the printed text Θεος, *God;* yet from the tenor of their comments upon it, and from their never citing it in the Arian controversy, it appears that they always read ὁς, *who;* or, ὁ, *which*." He adds as a note, " It must not be judged from the present copies of the text in Nyssen and others, but from the manner of their commenting upon the place, how the text was read in their days." The editors of the Greek Fathers, misled by their prejudices, altered the text of their authors to agree with the received text. So Griesbach observes, it is certain that Cyril of Alexandria did not read Θεος, though that reading is frequently found in the printed text of that writer. Nor is it cited by any Greek father before the fifth or sixth century. Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople in the sixth century, is charged with corrupting the text. Archbishop Newcome says, that " if we read ὁς, *he who*, we have a similar construction Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 18; Rom. viii. 32. See Dr. Benson's judicious note on the text. Also Griesbach's excellent note; and the judgement of Wetstein, Owen, and Nichols in Bowyer.

[3] *Manifested in* the *flesh*.] He was a real man, and not a man in appearance only, as the Gnostics and Docetæ taught, to whom the apostle seems to allude. See ch. i. 4, vi. 20. Compare also 1 John iv. 2, 3, 2 John ver. 7. Perhaps the expression *manifested in the flesh* may allude to his appearance in a very humble form, not at all adapted to his high pretensions and claims.

[4] *Justified by* the *spirit*.] *q. d.* Mean as was his appearance in comparison with the magnitude of his claims, he fully justified the character he assumed by his miracles, by his resurrection, and by the gifts of the holy spirit. " was justified by the miraculous and extraordinary gifts of the spirit." Benson.

[5] *Appeared to* his *messengers:*] " ωφθη αγγελοις, *seen by messengers*." Wakefield. *i. e.* He appeared to his apostles, to those whom he appointed to be the witnesses of his resurrection and the heralds of his gospel. This is an obvious and a most important sense, well suited to the connexion. That he was seen by angels, or celestial spirits, according to the common interpretation, is scarcely intelligible, and at best irrelevant. See Benson; also Gosset in Bowyer.

[6] *Proclaimed to* the *nations*.] This publication of the gospel

believed on in the *world*[7], *was taken up into glory*[8]. Ch. III. Ver. 16.

In the great and opulent city of Ephesus, which, on account of the magnificence and celebrity of the temple of Diana, may be regarded as the metropolis of heathen idolatry, you hear much of the solemn mysteries of heathen worship. But to all who impartially consider the subject it will appear beyond all contradiction that the Christian religion, which teaches the true worship of the Supreme Being, reveals far more extraordinary and more useful mysteries than heathenism can boast.

Jesus of Nazareth, a man in all respects like his brethren, who appeared in a humble form during his personal ministry, and who suffered an ignominious death, justified his pretensions to a divine legation by the miracles which he wrought, and particularly by his resurrection from the dead. Of

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to the Gentiles is the great mystery which was so long unknown, so utterly unexpected, and so offensive to the Jews: which had been revealed to the apostle, which he was commissioned to teach, and upon which he so fondly insists as an unexampled display of divine mercy. See Benson.

[7] *Believed on.*] επιστευθη. Wakefield supposes επιστευθη is here to be taken for επιστωθη, as he has himself translated it 2 Thess. i. 10, Rom. iii. 2. He would render it *established by evidence.*

[8] *Was taken up into glory:*] or, *gloriously received.* ανελημφθη, *was received.* This word is applied to our Lord's ascension, Mark xvi. 19, Acts i. 2, 11, 22. See Luke ix. 51; and the clause is generally understood of that remarkable event. A friend of Dr. Benson understands it of the glorious reception which the gospel obtained in the world: see Acts xx. 13, 14, xxiii. 31; Eph. vi. 15; 2 Tim. iv. 11; which justify this translation of ανελημφθη. The objection against which interpretation is, that it coincides with the preceding clause; but if Mr. Wakefield's interpretation be admitted, this objection is precluded.

Ch. III. Ver. 16. this interesting event we have the clearest evidence; for he showed himself alive after his suffering, to the apostles, whom he had chosen to be witnesses of this important fact, and to be his messengers to publish his gospel through the world; and among others he condescended to appear even to myself. In consequence of this assurance, and in virtue of the important trust which was confided to them, the apostles of Christ have published his gospel to all mankind, without distinction of Jew or Gentile; and the doctrine which they taught has been so powerfully attested by the various miracles which they have been enabled to perform in confirmation of it, that it has already met with a glorious reception in the world: thousands both of Jews and Gentiles have embraced the Christian faith, and become members of the Christian community, and the present success of the gospel is a happy earnest of its perpetual establishment, and its increasing prosperity. Finally, this distinguished teacher ascended up into heaven in the presence of his apostles; from whence he will return at the appointed time, in power and great glory, to raise the dead and to judge the world.

2. The apostle proceeds to predict the great apostasy of the latter days. Ch. iv. 1—5.

Ch. IV. Ver. 1. *Yet*[1] *the spirit expressly declareth*[2], *that in*

[1] *Yet.*] So Newcome, who explains it thus in his note: "However, important and instructive as these truths are, the

latter times[3] *some will apostatize*[4] *from the faith,* Ch. IV. Ver. 1.
attending to deceitful spirits[5], *and to doctrines concerning demons*[6].

Such is the present state of the Christian religion, so pure in its doctrine, so satisfactory in its evidence, so extensive in its propagation, and so glorious in its prospects, that it seems natural to expect that the whole world will soon be converted to the profession of it. But the spirit of prophecy distinctly announces a state of things very contrary to our fond expectations and desires; for I am authorized expressly to declare, that in after times, at what period God only knows, some professing Christians, and those not a few in number, nor insignificant in rank and influence, will grossly apo-

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holy spirit hath revealed that corruptions of the Christian doctrine will arise."

[2] *Expressly declareth.*] Macknight supposes, "with an audible voice;" but this is improbable. Joseph Mede suspects an allusion to Dan. xi. 36; and that *the latter times* are, the last period of the Roman empire, about A.D. 400.

[3] *In latter times.*] "in the times long after the apostle's days." Benson. See 2 Tim. iii. 1. "*Non est temporibus ultimis, sed secuturis.*" Rosenmuller.

[4] *Some will apostatize*:] not all, even though it may be a great majority. See Bishop Newton, Dr. Benson, and Archbishop Newcome.

[5] *Deceitful spirits.*] "false prophets, pretending to inspiration." Newcome. See Macknight.

[6] *Demons.*] The spirits of dead men; the objects of popular worship. See Bishop Newton and Archbishop Newcome. *Doctrines of*, i. e. concerning, *demons.* For a similar construction see Gal. ii. 20, Heb. vi. 2." Benson. "doctrines about dead men." Wakefield. "The doctrine concerning the spirits or souls of dead men," says Dr. Priestley, "makes one of the most important articles in the corruptions of the church of Rome."

CH. IV. VER. 1. statize from the primitive faith; and will introduce doctrines foreign to the truth and to the spirit of genuine Christianity. They will listen to men who falsely pretend to be divinely inspired, and who will lead them into gross and dangerous errors. And in the first place, they will teach strange doctrines concerning departed men; that their spirits are still in a conscious state; and that by the prayers of the church, and the use of certain unmeaning ceremonies, they may be canonized, and become entitled to religious worship: thus introducing an idolatry into the Christian religion very little different from, or superior to, those abominable rites which they profess to have renounced.

2. *Through* the *hypocrisy of liars, whose consciences are seared.*

This miserable and mischievous idolatry will be introduced by the instruction and recommendation of men professing extraordinary piety, but who in fact are mere deceivers, teachers of falsehood, and hardened in iniquity beyond all feeling of remorse, and all sense of shame.

3. *Forbidding to marry,* commanding *abstinence from meats*[1], *which God created to be received*

[1] *Forbidding—commanding.*] "*Ante απεχεσθαι est ellipsis participii κελευοντων. Similis vero ellipsis* 1 Cor. xiv. 34." Rosenmuller. "A bold ellipsis well supplied by our translation." Benson. "Our author abounds in these hyperbata," says Mr. Wakefield, who translates the passage, "giving commands about abstinence from marriage and from meats." "In the grand apostasy this has been eminently fulfilled in the bishops, monks, friars, nuns, and secular priests, in whom marriage is looked upon as worse than adultery." Also, "the

with thanksgiving by those who believe and acknowledge this truth[2], *that every creature of God* is *good, and that nothing is to be refused* if it be *received with thanksgiving; for it is made holy by the divine appointment*[3] *and by prayer*[4]. Ch. IV. Ver. 4. 5.

Another mark of this lamentable apostasy will be the disparagement of marriage, which God has instituted for the most wise and beneficent purposes; and the encouraging, and in some cases absolutely enjoining, celibacy, under the absurd pretence of superior purity and elevation of mind. These lying teachers will also lay great stress upon

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trifling distinction of meats which the church of Rome observes in Lent, and on two days every week throughout the year, is exactly agreeable to what was here predicted." Benson. "The doctrine of fasting, and the abstinence from particular meats at particular times, is so particularly pointed out here, that it is extraordinary that the prophecy should not have prevented its own accomplishment." Dr. Priestley.

[2] *This truth, that every creature,* &c.] So Wakefield; with whom Rosenmuller agrees: "*eam nempe veritatem, quam statim* ver. 4 *commemorat.*" This implies that the indiscriminate use of food is not lawful to those who entertain conscientious scruples upon the subject. See Rom. xiv. 23.

[3] *By divine appointment.*] So Wakefield. Literally, "by the word of God," as in the common version. "The gospel," says Dr. Benson, "has abolished the ceremonial law, and the distinction between meats clean and unclean." "The discriminating notes of these apostatizers," says Archbishop Newcome, "belong remarkably to the church of Rome."

[4] *And by prayer.*] Bishop Newton observes, that "man is free to partake of all the good creatures of God, but thanksgiving is the necessary condition. What then can be said of those who have their tables spread with the most plentiful gifts of God, and yet constantly sit down and rise up again without suffering one thought of the giver to intrude upon them? Can such persons be reputed either to believe or acknowledge the truth?" See Macknight.

Ch. IV. Ver. 5.

distinctions of food; enjoining upon some, habitual abstinence from every kind of animal food; appointing long annual fasts; and setting apart particular days, in which abstinence from certain kinds of food will be represented as highly meritorious, and the indiscriminate use of meat, as a great and almost unpardonable sin; thus discovering a spirit directly opposite to that of the gospel, which teaches that every thing which is fit for the food of man may at any time be lawfully used by him, being created for this purpose by the benevolent Maker of all, who requires no other condition of the participation of his bounty, but a grateful acknowledgement of his goodness, and the temperate use of his blessings. There are indeed some, who, having been educated in Jewish prejudices, are not yet fully acquainted with their Christian liberty. In them it would be improper to indulge indiscriminately in the use of those kinds of food which the law pronounces unclean, till their minds are fully satisfied of the lawfulness of it. And the gospel makes allowance for uninformed and weak consciences, while it prohibits all infringement of the rights of others. The liberty, therefore, of using any kind of food indiscriminately, can with propriety be extended only to those who, being well instructed in the liberal genius of the Christian doctrine, and who, being apprized that all ceremonial distinctions are abolished by the Christian law, believe and acknowledge that all the creatures of God, capable of administering nourishment to man,

are in a moral and ceremonial sense equally good; and that nothing is to be rejected as unclean which is received with a thankful spirit. For that, whatever distinctions of food might be permitted or enjoined under the Jewish dispensation, the gospel sets them all aside, and allows the free use of every kind of food, being all sanctified and made lawful by the express appointment of God in the abolition of the ceremonial law, and by that blessing of God, which Christians, who act consistently with their principles, will never fail to implore upon their food, and by those thanksgivings which they will habitually render to him for the riches of his bounty. Ch. IV. Ver. 5.

3. The apostle urges Timothy to insist upon these topics in his public instructions, and to discourage the growth of a spirit of superstition among the believers at Ephesus, ver. 6, 7.

If thou remind the brethren of these things, thou wilt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of the faith, and of that good doctrine to which thou hast attained[1]. *But reject profane and old women's fables*[2], *and exercise thyself in piety*[3]. 6. 7.

[1] *To which thou hast attained.*] "παρηκολουθηκας, *quam es assecutus. Nimirum sensu et intelligentia.*" Rosenmuller. "with which thou art acquainted." Wakefield. "to which thou hast adhered." Benson; who insinuates that possibly Timothy might lean rather too much to those Jewish prejudices in which he had been educated; which might induce the apostle to repeat his cautions.

[2] *Reject,* &c.] "*Affanias procul habe à te eorum, qui vel ex*

Ch. IV. Ver. 7. If you inculcate faithfully and strongly upon the brethren at Ephesus the fundamental principles of the Christian doctrine, which I have thus briefly stated; if you warn them of that great apostasy which is to take place in future times; and if you caution them against those superstitious practices which directly lead to it, which some are too ready to introduce, and particularly against the affectation of superior purity, the great merit of celibacy, and that useless distinction of meats and days, upon which the Jewish zealots lay so great a stress, you will thus approve yourself a faithful minister of the gospel, thoroughly instructed in its salutary truths; and you will show that you have not taken so much pains to acquire information to no purpose. And let me once more warn you to reject all those foolish, traditionary tales, which the Jewish rabbis relate in order to countenance their trifling and puerile injunctions, which are only fit for the nursery, and which every man of right understanding must hold in contempt; and take pains to improve

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Paganismo vel Judaismo ad Christi cultum transierunt." Rosenmuller. "Instead of acquainting himself with the idle traditions of the Jews, or tracing out the fabulous generations of the Æons, Timothy was to exercise himself in acquiring the more extensive knowledge, and in attaining the more complete practice of pure Christianity." Benson. See ch. i. 4. Profane old women's or old wives' fables. "*Fabulas istas vocat* profanas, *quia nulla Dei revelatione nituntur; deinde* aniles: i. e. *absurdas, non minus quam illas quas aniculæ puerulis recitant.*" Rosenmuller.

[3] *In piety.*] "*Exerce te potius ad veram pietatem.*" Rosenmuller. See ch. iii. 16.

in the knowledge and the practice of that pure and rational and manly religion, which alone is acceptable to God and beneficial to mankind. Ch. IV. Ver. 7.

It is impossible to read this section with attention, without remarking the precision and distinctness with which the apostle here, as well as upon other occasions, foretells the grand apostasy which was to take place through the whole Christian church; which, though eminently conspicuous in the church of Rome, is not altogether limited to it. And from the extreme improbability of the event, when it was foretold, we may certainly infer his prophetic inspiration, and the truth of the doctrine which he was authorized to teach. While, on the other hand, this circumstantial prediction of a state of things so contrary to what might naturally have been expected and desired, may lead us to acquiesce in it, as what was foreseen and intended by Divine Providence for the accomplishment of the most beneficial, though unknown, purposes; and which shall in due time certainly terminate in the perpetual and universal triumph of truth and goodness.

SECTION VIII.

Ch. IV. *THE APOSTLE states the great importance of practical religion, and urges Timothy to maintain an exemplary behaviour.* Ch. iv. 8—16.

1. The apostle states the great importance of practical religion, the reward annexed to which will make ample compensation for all temporal sufferings, ver. 8—11.

Ver. 8. *For bodily exercise*[1] *is profitable for little, but piety* is *profitable for all things*[2]*; having a promise* both *of the present and of the future life.*

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[1] *Bodily exercise.*] σωματικη γυμνασια. Whitby, Estius, Doddridge and Newcome, understand this phrase as an allusion to the gymnastic exercises, and the celebrated games of Greece. Benson and Macknight understand it "of the corporeal mortifications recommended and practised by the Essenes, an ascetic sect of the Jews. "Γυμναζειν *proprie est exerceri in gymnasiis: inde cœpit transferri ad omnia quæ agendo discimus.*" Rosenmuller; who thinks that the apostle, by the expression *bodily exercise*, alludes to those superstitious practices against which he had been warning his young disciple and friend.

[2] *For little—for all things.*] "προς ολιγον, *i. e.* χρονον—— προς παντα, *i. e.* χρονον." Rosenmuller. Wakefield also translates the passage, "Bodily exercise is profitable for a short time only, but godliness is profitable for ever." "Bodily exercise profiteth little, viz. for health and strength, for obtaining a corruptible crown. Godliness has the promise of the life which now is, see Mark x. 30, Rom. viii. 28. Good men have reliance on God, peace of mind and conscience, hope of future happiness, and those temporal blessings which industry, temperance,

I have been urging you to exercise yourself in the practice of true religion, to make a serious business of it, and to endure all that labour and self-denial which may be necessary to your success in it. Follow my advice, and be assured, Timothy, your labour will not be lost. That bodily exercise, which is necessary to success in the celebrated games of Greece, may be useful to promote health, vigour, and agility, to secure the garland of victory and the applause of nations. But these are comparatively trifling things. The rewards of true religion are infinitely superior. Health, competence, content, and cheerfulness, together with the divine blessing, are the natural and the promised rewards of industry, integrity, prudence, and piety in this life; to which the revelation of the gospel annexes the grand prize of immortality. While others therefore contend for that which, if obtained, is at best a corruptible crown, we strive for one that is incorruptible. They labour for time, we for eternity. Ch. IV. Ver. 8.

This is *true doctrine*[3], *and worthy to be received by all.* 9.

What I have declared concerning the importance of true religion, and the rewards annexed to it, is a solemn and momentous truth, which cannot be too

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integrity, and frugality, have a natural tendency to produce." Newcome.

[3] *This* is *true doctrine.*] Dr. Benson observes that "St. Paul has used this expression four times, 1 Tim. i. 15, 2 Tim. ii. 11, Tit. iii. 8, and in this place. They were all matters of certain truth and of great importance; and the apostle used this expression to call up men's attention to them."

Ch. IV. often inculcated, too firmly believed, nor too steadily regarded.

Ver. 10. *For, with this view, we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the protector of all men, especially of believers* [1].

As a proof that I am sincere in what I advance concerning the importance and the rewards of true religion, I may appeal to my own labours and sufferings in this honourable cause. For you well know that my life is devoted to the instruction of mankind in the great truths of the gospel, and the practice of evangelical piety; every where insisting that this, and this alone, can ensure peace here, and happiness hereafter. For this, I am on the one hand reproached by the Jews, as treating with contempt the rites of the law, and on the other, I am persecuted by the heathen, as seducing men to renounce the religion of their ancestors, and to confine themselves to the worship of the one true and living God, who is indeed the only proper object of religious adoration, the benevolent parent, preserver, and benefactor of the human race, and to whose mercy in Jesus Christ, believers, especially, are under the highest obligations.

11. *These things give in charge and teach.*

Herein, O Timothy, I strictly and solemnly enjoin you to follow my example, and whatever labours may be necessary, or whatever reproach you

[1] *The protector,* &c.] σωτηρ· "the protector and preserver of all mankind, but his goodness has been most abundant to Christians." Archbishop Newcome.

may incur, persist in teaching the importance of practical religion, and in charging those to whom your discourses are addressed, to maintain an habitual and supreme regard to God. Ch. IV. Ver. 11.

2. The apostle exhorts Timothy to conciliate respect by exhibiting himself as a pattern of Christian virtue, and diligently to improve himself in those qualifications which were requisite to his reputation and success as an evangelist, ver. 12—15.

Let no man despise thy youth[2]*: but be thou an example to the believers, in conversation, in behaviour*[3]*, in love*[4]*, in fidelity, in purity.* 12.

You are very young for the important station that you occupy in the church, and it will require great discretion in you to behave in such a manner as may best comport with your character and office. Be therefore constantly upon your guard, that you give no just occasion for harsh and severe remarks; exhibit to all the Christians at Ephesus an eminent

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[2] *Despise thy youth.*] This caution is a strong presumption in favour of the supposition that this epistle was written A.D. 55 or 56, and negatives the hypothesis which places the date ten years later, when such a caution would have been unnecessary.

[3] *In behaviour.*] "ἀναστροφῇ, *vivendi, et agendi ratio.*" Schleusner. In this sense the word is commonly used in the New Testament; and Schleusner has referred to Polybius and Arrian to prove that the word is used in the same sense by Greek authors, in confirmation of which he also refers to Wesselingius. Stephens in his *Thesaurus* denies that the word is used in that signification by classical writers. See Macknight.

[4] *In love.*] The received text adds, "*in spirit;*" but these words are wanting in the Alexandrine and other copies and versions, and are rejected by Griesbach.

Ch. IV. Ver. 12. example of discretion and good sense in your conversation, of prudence in your general behaviour, of a kind and tender disposition of spirit, of faithfulness to your promises and to your profession, and of temperance, purity, and strict habitual self-government.

13. *Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to instruction.*

Whether my return to Ephesus be speedy, as I hope, or whether it be deferred to a more distant period than I at present intend or foresee, be sure to occupy the interval, whether longer or shorter, in the faithful and judicious discharge of the duty of your station. Attend to the reading of the Scriptures, both privately for your own benefit, and publicly for the instruction of the church. Admonish and exhort your hearers to the discharge of those duties which the gospel requires, and instruct them in the pure doctrine of the Christian religion, warning them against those errors with which Jewish superstition, or heathen philosophy, would deform the simplicity of Christian truth.

14. *Neglect not the gift* [1] *which is in thee, which was*

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[1] *The gift,* &c.] The extraordinary gifts of the spirit. See Benson, Doddridge, Newcome, Macknight. "*Recte ven. Noesselt. statuere videtur: in* locis N. T. omnibus, *qui tradunt, quosdam, susceptâ fide Christianâ, per apostolos, impositis manibus, quanquam et adhibita invocatione et accuratiore in doctrinâ Christianâ institutione,* spiritu sancto *imbutos fuisse, nihil aliud quæri et intelligi debere, quam effectam his omnibus singularem animorum concitationem, qua tanquam divini Numinis afflatu se senserint impulsi, ut illam doctrinam læti, ac imperterriti profiterentur.*" Rosenmuller.

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conferred upon thee because of previous recommendation[2], *with the imposition of the hands of the presbytery.* Ch. IV. Ver. 14.

That the extraordinary gifts of the holy spirit were not so common as some have imagined, may be readily conceded. But to maintain, with this writer, that giving the spirit by imposition of the apostle's hands *never* signifies any thing more than exciting courage and zeal, appears to me to be quite irreconcileable to the language of the New Testament, and to lead, by natural consequence, to explaining away the miracles of the gospel altogether; for few of the miracles of the New Testament rest upon more direct evidence than the gifts of the holy spirit to the primitive converts. Gal. iii. 2—5, 1 Cor. xii.

[2] *Because of previous recommendation.*] δια προφητειας.] See ch. i. 18, and the note there. The apostle took Timothy with him as a companion upon the recommendation of the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, Acts xvi. 2. These brethren, whose recommendation weighed so much with the apostle, were probably men of eminence, and prophets or teachers in the church: and the apostle received Timothy in consequence of their *prophecies*, or previous testimonies concerning him.

This appears to me to be an easy solution of a difficult text. And it only requires that the word προφητεια should be understood in its proper and primary sense as a *previous* but not *inspired* declaration. And it is not easy to see why the evangelist Timothy should be the object of inspired prophecies: though it was very becoming for him to be, and we know it as a fact that he was recommended to the apostle by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. It is generally allowed that the word προφητης does not always signify an inspired person, nor προφητεια an inspired declaration: see Matt. xiii. 35, Tit. i. 12, Rom. xii. 6, 1 Thess. v. 20. Bengelius proposes to "connect δια προφητειας with τθ πρεσβυτερια, and to inclose the intermediate words between commas. *Imposition of hands* was made by one, viz. the apostle: Prophecy was made by many, and by equals, who wished Timothy success;" *q. d.* given thee at the recommendation of the presbytery with the imposition of *my* hands. See Bowyer. "*Which was given thee by authority:* i. e. of teachers, or, 'for the purpose of teaching,' according as the word προφητειας is taken in the singular or the plural number." Wakefield. "according to the prophecies, or, after some prophecies." Benson; who refers to Mark ii. 1, Acts xxiv. 17, as authorities for this sense of δια. "*According to prophecy:*

Ch. IV. Ver. 14. I have conferred upon you the office of an evangelist, and the gifts of the spirit, agreeably to the earnest recommendation of persons of the greatest experience and most eminent piety in Lystra and Derbe. After which, by solemn imposition of hands, you were commended by the elders of those churches to the blessing of God, when I associated you with myself in my evangelical mission. Let not these gifts lie dormant in your breast; nor let the duties of your office be neglected, but let them be exercised and improved to their proper use, either

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i. e. by particular inspiration moving him so to do." Macknight. " agreeably to the predictions of the Christian prophets." Newcome. " *Quæ data est tibi per prophetiam.*" Grotius; who remarks, that prophets are said to do what they foretell. Ch. i. 18, Jer. i. 10. " *Quod datum est tibi per prophetiam: cum scilicet prophetæ, instinctu spiritus sancti, juberent te in Evangelii ministrum eligi: testantes et prædicantes insignem te virum in dicendo et adhortando fore.*" Slichtingius. Both these learned commentators suppose that inspired prophets marked out Timothy as a fit person to be employed as a missionary of the gospel; and with them Crellius agrees. Przipcovius takes προφητειας in the accusative case, and understands the apostle that gifts were conferred upon Timothy for the purpose of teaching—*ad prophetandum, hoc est, docendum;* which is one sense that Mr. Wakefield has assigned. But this cannot be the meaning of the word ch. i. 18; which speaks of prophecies which *went before* concerning him.

Perhaps the word χαρισμα may signify an office gratuitously conferred. 1 Pet. iv. 10.—" *munus in ecclesia Christiana demandatum.*" Schleusner. See Rom xii. 6, and the true interpretation of the text may be, " Neglect not thine office, i. e. *of evangelist,* which was conferred upon thee, or given to thee, i. e. *by me;* in consequence of previous recommendation, with imposition of the hands of the presbytery:" which, as Dr. Benson observes, " was frequently done in the apostle's days where no spiritual gift was imparted, when a superior blessed or prayed for an inferior," and when any were solemnly designated and set apart for some important office. See Acts xiii. 3.

for converting the heathen, or for the edification of the church. Ch. IV.

Make these things thy care[1], *be wholly in them, that thy improvement in all things may be apparent.* Ver. 15.

Regard the honourable and faithful discharge of your office at Ephesus as your proper and most important business; let it engross your whole mind, devote yourself entirely to it; suffer no foreign consideration, no motives of self-indulgence, or secular advantage, to draw off your attention from it; and let your application to the various branches of your ministerial duty be so constant, and indefatigable, that all may bear testimony to your faithfulness, to your improvement, and to your success.

Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine; continue in them[2], *for* by *doing this, thou wilt save both thyself and thy hearers*[3]. 16.

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[1] *Make these things thy care.*] "The word μελετη," says Dr. Benson, "is used to denote all the preparatory exercises of mind or body, which are made use of by those who are desirous of excelling in any art or science. It is applied to those who were training up for rhetoricians, or to those who designed to contend in the agonistic games, or to engage in the dangers and fatigues of war. The apostle recommends to Timothy, by proper previous exercises, to qualify himself for excelling in the discharge of the work of an evangelist." "*Hæc meditare, in his, totus esto.*" Rosenmuller.

[2] *Continue in them.*] These words are probably a marginal gloss: they are wanting in the Æthiopic. Owen *ap.* Bowyer.

[3] *Wilt save both thyself and thy hearers.*] "These advices," says Dr. Priestley, "are very intelligible, and peculiarly excellent and important. They show the necessity of ministers labouring to form their own minds, of their acquiring useful knowledge, and using their utmost endeavours for the improvement

Ch. IV. Ver. 16. I conclude what I had to recommend concerning your personal and public conduct with two general advices; take heed to thyself, and take heed to thy doctrine. Let your conduct be exemplary, and your doctrine truly evangelical, the pure, uncorrupted truth of the gospel. Persevere in this honourable course. If you forsake the path of virtue, or the truth of Christianity, you will lose the benefit, and forfeit the reward of your past wisdom and fidelity. But by inflexible adherence to the practice of virtue, and to the purity of the Christian doctrine, you will in the first place ensure your own salvation, and in the second place you will do all that can be done for the salvation of your hearers. In many instances success will probably attend your pious labours; and where this is wanting, still you will not have laboured in vain; your work will be with the Lord, and your reward with your God.

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of their hearers. The apostle likewise intimates, though in a more indirect manner, the value of their labours with respect to their people. And if there be a duty of ministers, there must be a corresponding one on the part of the people, and of equal importance. If the ministers are to communicate instruction, the people are to receive it, not implicitly, but to give their best attention, and then judge for themselves. If it be the duty of the ministers to exhort, it is that of the people to improve by the word of exhortation."

SECTION IX.

THE APOSTLE gives directions to Timothy as to the most prudent method of administering reproof, and lays down rules concerning the relief of those widows who were to be supported by the church, and also concerning the qualifications and maintenance of others, who were to be employed in its offices among persons of their own sex. Ch. v. 1—16. Ch. V.

1. The apostle gives advice to the evangelist, as to the best method of administering reproof, ver. 1, 2.

Do not harshly rebuke an elderly man[1], *but beseech* him, *as a father; and the younger* men *as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.* Ver. 1. 2.

It does not become you who are a young man to administer reproof in a harsh and offensive manner to those who are more advanced in life, nor will such reproofs ever produce a good effect. If then you see any thing amiss in a man that is much older than yourself, modestly, and with becoming humility, ad-

[1] *An elderly man.*] The opposition in the two clauses of the verse shows that the word πρεσβυτερος is here used to express the *age*, not the *office*, of the person reproved. Dr. Benson has an excellent note upon the wisdom of the apostle's advice.

Ch. V. Ver. 2. monish him of his fault, and request him to change his conduct; addressing him as a father, with the respect due to his age and station. If you would reprove younger men, so as to produce a good effect, you must speak to them with the kindness of a brother, and let it appear that you do not reprove because you take pleasure in finding fault, but because you regard it as an indispensable, though a disagreeable duty. In like manner, administer reproof to elder women as to mothers, and to the younger as sisters, with that modesty and decorum which will not fail to produce a proper effect, and which becomes your character as a minister of the gospel.

2. The apostle directs, that widows should be taken care of; but that those widows who had families capable of supporting them, should be maintained by their families, ver. 3, 4.

3. *Support*[1] *widows who are widows indeed*[2].

Let those widows who are women of good character, who have no near relations, and who have not the means of supporting themselves, be maintained out of the public stock.

4. *But if any widow have children or grand-children, let* these *learn first to show piety at home*[3],

[1] *Support.*] "τιμα, *honour*; i. e. *support* or *maintain*: see ver. 17; also Matt. xv. 4, 5, 6, Mark vii. 9—13, Acts xxviii. 10." Benson.

[2] *Widows indeed.*] "who are what that word importeth, really bereaved and desolate." Benson. Grotius and Calvin suppose an allusion to the etymology of the word: χηρω, *destituo, privor.*

[3] *First to show piety at home.*] Macknight's translation is,

and to requite their *progenitors, for this is acceptable to God*[4]. Ch. V. Ver. 4.

If any widows have descendants capable of maintaining them, there is no reason why they should be supported at the public expense. Let children and grand-children, when they have provided decently for their own families, regard it as an indispensable duty to maintain their aged parents, and thus to requite the care that was bestowed upon them in the helpless years of infancy and childhood. This conduct is acceptable to God; it is a branch of true religion, and will be creditable to your Christian profession.

3. The apostle requires, that widows who are really destitute should be decently supported, and animadverts severely upon those widows who lead a life of dissipation, and upon all who are unwilling to contribute to the relief of their aged parents, ver. 5—8.

But she who is a widow indeed, and left alone, 5.
hopeth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day[5].

"Let these learn first piously to take care of their own families, and then to requite their parents." Duty to parents was called *piety*. See Newcome *in loc.* and Wetstein on Acts xvii. 33.—"*Rectius de liberis viduarum hæc intelliguntur. Nam* ευσεβειν κ. τ. λ. *proprie est venerari, colere familiam suam, i. e. sustentare.* Οικος, *familia et omnes qui ad eam pertinent, matres etiam, et aviæ.*" Rosenmuller; who quotes a passage from Chrysostom giving the same interpretation.

[4] *Acceptable to God.*] The received text reads "*good and* acceptable;" but the best copies omit the words καλον και, and Griesbach leaves them out of the text.

Ch. V. Ver. 5. I have directed you to maintain widows who are widows indeed. By this expression, I mean those widows who are both solitary and pious; widows who have no children or near relations able to afford them needful assistance; and whose character is an ornament to their profession; who believe in God, who obey the gospel, and who maintain a spirit of habitual devotion by the regular performance of religious exercises at stated and convenient seasons.

6. *But she who rioteth in pleasure*[1] *is dead while she liveth.*

A widow who, being at liberty from the restraint of the conjugal state, gives herself up to a life of luxury and dissipation, is a disgrace to a religious community; and with respect to every virtuous principle, and to every valuable purpose of life, she is as though she were dead.

7. *These things also give in charge, that they may be blameless.*

Give these directions to the Ephesians, concerning the distinction to be made between those widows who do, and those who do not need, and

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[5] *Night and day.*] "who prays morning and evening, who is stated and regular in devotion." Doddridge.

[1] *Who rioteth in pleasure.*] So Newcome. Dr. Whitby observes, that the original word σπαταλωσα especially refers to drinking strong and costly liquors. *Is dead.* The same thought occurs in some heathen writers. "It was reckoned a beautiful saying of Pythagoras, that a worthless man is a dead man. That the same thought is not as much admired in St. Paul," says Dr. Benson, "can proceed from nothing but an unreasonable partiality for what is of heathen extraction, and an ungenerous contempt of what is Jewish or Christian."

merit, to be supported from the funds of the society, that they may know how to conduct themselves with discretion and propriety. Ch. V. Ver. 7.

But if any provide not for his own, but especially for those of his own household, he hath renounced the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever[2]. 8.

I have directed that those who are able shall maintain their widowed parents. This direction, I am confident, will be disputed by none who are worthy of the Christian name. For if any one who is able to maintain a widowed mother should rather suffer her to be dependent upon public charity, and indeed if he does not provide according to his ability for every member of his family, he might as well make a formal and public renunciation of Christianity at once. He has renounced it, in fact, by refusing to comply with its most obvious requisitions; and he is in truth a greater enemy to the gospel than an avowed unbeliever; for his conduct in neglecting a duty which is practised by unbelievers themselves, is a scandal to the honourable cause which he professes to espouse.

4. He describes the character and qualifications of those widows who were to be admitted as dea-

[2] *Worse than an unbeliever.*] "*graviter accusat liberos et nepotes divites, qui sinebant ecclesiæ oneri esse eos quos ipsi alere debebant.* Ethnico pejor: *quia Ethnici suas primum domos tutantur, suasque necessitudines fovendas omnibus modis censent. Cicero in Ep. ad Capitonem: suos quisque debet tueri.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. V. conesses, and employed as instructors of their own sex, ver. 9, 10.

Ver. 9. *Let not a widow be admitted upon the list*[1] *who is under sixty years* of age, *having been the wife*
10. *of one man*[2]*; in reputation for good works; if she have educated children, if she have entertained strangers, if she have washed the feet of the saints*[3]*, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently attended to every kind office*[4].

Let all widows who are in want of relief, and who maintain good characters, be maintained from the contributions of the church, and let them be em-

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[1] *The list:*] that is, of deaconesses. Archbishop Newcome inserts the word into the text; and Benson, Doddridge, and all the commentators agree that this must be the apostle's meaning; for surely he could not intend that no widows who were under sixty years of age should participate in the alms of the church.

[2] *The wife of one man.*] Women could divorce their husbands. Mark x. 12, *Poli Synop.* See ch. iii. 2. Newcome. Also Benson's note on ch. iii. 2. In the case of the fornicator at Corinth, 1 Cor. v., the woman had divorced the father to marry the son.

[3] *Washed the feet.*] "a usual piece of civility, as well as a great refreshment in the eastern countries to wash a person's feet, or to take care that it should be done for them." Gen. xviii. 4, xix. 2; Luke vii. 38, 44; John xiii. 5, 14, 15." Benson.

[4] *Attended to every kind office.*] See Wakefield. Dr. Macknight justly observes, that the poor widows cannot be supposed to have done all this at their own expense. Hence he infers, that having been deaconesses in the younger part of life, at the age of sixty they were advanced to the office of instructors or female presbyters. This idea of Dr. Macknight is perhaps countenanced by Rom. xvi. 1, as an aged woman would hardly have undertaken so long a journey. It is also possible that widows who received alms might be employed by the church in performing the offices of humanity and hospitality previously to their appointment to the office of deaconess.

ployed as occasion may require in acts of public hospitality and charity. But let not such persons be admitted to the honourable distinction of permanent officers in the Christian society, till they have reached their sixtieth year; nor then, unless they have always led virtuous and irreproachable lives. An aged widow may be received with propriety into the number of deaconesses and instructors, if she have not for any cause whatever divorced herself from her own husband, and married another while the former was living; which practice, however it may be allowed by the laws of heathen states, is forbidden by the purity of the Christian institute. If such a person, while in her noviciate, have given useful instruction to the children who were placed by the church under her care; if she have provided lodging for strangers whom the church has entertained; if she have condescended to the humblest offices of kindness and hospitality, and have washed the feet of the guests of the church; if she have visited and succoured the afflicted and distressed, and have abounded in works of humanity and kindness while she was a widow, receiving the church's alms; such a person may with propriety be advanced to those offices which the Christian church has allotted to the female sex. The excellence of her character will be a pledge for her future conduct, and will do credit to any station in which she may be placed. Ch. V. Ver. 10.

5. He assigns reasons why he disapproves of ad-

Ch. V. mitting younger widows to this honourable station, ver. 11—15.

Ver. 11. *But younger widows refuse; for when they grow*
weary of the restraints of Christ they will marry[1]:
12. *exposing themselves to censure*[2], *because they vio-*
late their first promise[3].

Discreet, steady, and aged matrons are the only persons properly qualified to occupy the station of female deacons and instructors. If, therefore, any

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[1] *They grow weary of restraint.*] καταστρηνιασωσι. Erasmus derives the word from "στερειν, *metaphora sumpta a jumentis, quæ cum pabulo ferociunt, avellunt habenas, et suopte arbitrio feruntur.*"—"στηνιᾶν, *ut nos docent Græcorum grammatici, est* στερειν ἡνιας." Grotius; who explains the passage, "*Postquam tædere eos cœpit istius servitutis quam ecclesiæ promiserant. Per Christum intellige ecclesiam.*" Glassius and Le Clerc translate the clause, "who do not obey the reins." Estius observes, that χρισ-ε is governed by κατα in composition: *q. d.* They pull the reins contrary to Christ. "when they grow weary of the restraints of Christ, they wish to marry." Wakefield. The apostle's idea seems to be, that widows when they become deaconesses, or teachers, are as it were married to Christ, and pledge themselves to devote their whole time to the service of the church: but if they quit their stations and marry again, which young widows would often be inclined to do, they as it were violate their conjugal faith, and expose themselves to censure for their irresolution. Dr. Priestley supposes that the apostle refers not merely to their marrying again, but to their marrying unbelievers.

[2] *Exposing themselves to censure.*] "are blameable." Wakefield: not, as in the public version, "having damnation."—"Κριμα *vocat judicium probarum, ab earum facto dissentiens.*" Grotius. For the difference between κριμα and κατακριμα see 1 Cor. xi. 32. "κρ. *non de æterna damnatione, sed latiore sensu de culpa sumitur, seu vitio reprehensioni obnoxio.*" Rosenmuller.

[3] *Their first promise:*] that is, "the promise they had made of leading a single life, and devoting themselves to the offices of religion." Macknight. "v. g. *se eleemosynis non abusuras, et vitam honestam acturas, ecclesiæque inserviturasesse.*" Rosenmuller.

who are younger should desire to be admitted, let them be refused; for, however zealous they may be for a time, they will probably by degrees grow weary of the restraints to which they have subjected themselves, and may choose to enter again into the conjugal state. Thus they bring themselves into disgrace by violating the resolution they formed when they were admitted into those offices of the church, which are appropriated to, and can only with propriety be performed by, matrons who are not involved in the cares and troubles of the conjugal life. Ch. V. Ver. 12.

And withal, being idle, they learn to go about from house to house, and are not only idle, but tattlers also, and meddlers, speaking things *which they ought not.* 13.

If young and indiscreet women are admitted to be instructors and deaconesses, the nature of their office leading them to go from house to house to communicate instruction, to visit the sick, and to perform the offices of religion and humanity, they soon contract a gossiping disposition, and pass their time in idle talk, and impertinent scandal, officiously meddling in the concerns of other people, and imprudently betraying the secrets of families.

I would therefore have the younger widows *marry, bear children, manage domestic affairs, give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.* 14.

It is wrong for the younger women to aspire to those offices which require the leisure of a single

Ch. V. Ver. 14. life, the engagements of which it is often inconvenient to keep, and always disreputable to violate. Let then such persons enter again, if they think fit, into the conjugal state, and fulfill the duties of that honourable relation with discretion and credit, and let them not give occasion to the adversaries of the Christian religion to calumniate its professors, by assuming offices unbecoming their character and time of life.

15. *For some have already turned aside after Satan*[1]. I am thus particular in my advice, because I have already seen instances of the bad consequence of young women intruding into the province of aged matrons; for some, by indiscretion, having forfeited the esteem of the Christian community, have apostatized from the Christian faith, and have returned to their former state of darkness and heathenism.

6. He concludes this subject by urging it upon all Christians, who had it in their power, to support their aged and poor relations, and not suffer them to become a burden to the church, ver. 16.

16. *If any believer*[2] *have relations that are widows,*

[1] *After Satan.*] "some have already turned aside from Christianity, and gone among the unbelievers." Benson: see ch. i. 20. "*Secutæ sunt Satanam:* i. e. *ad idololatriam redierunt.*" Rosenmuller.

[2] *If any believer.*] ει τις πιστος η πιστη, "if any man or woman who believeth." Newcome.—"*Christianus, aut Christiana.*" Rosenmuller. But it is observable that the apostle cautiously avoids the word *Christian:* which was no doubt given by their enemies at Antioch as a term of reproach, though it is now deservedly held in high estimation. *A Christian is the highest style of man.*

let such support them, and let not the church be burdened, that it may support those that are widows indeed. Ch. v. Ver. 16.

I once more request, and indeed require, all persons professing faith in Christ, who have mothers, or other female relations, in a widowed state, to maintain them decently, if it be in their power. And let not the church be burdened with them, when their own families are in circumstances competent to their support. But let the funds of the church remain entire for the use of those widows who are infirm and destitute, and who have no children or other near relations who can do any thing for them. These are the proper objects of public bounty, and of these there will always be a sufficient number whose necessity will require all that can be conveniently spared from the public stock.

SECTION X.

The apostle gives directions concerning the proper treatment of the elders of the church; he charges Timothy to be very cautious with respect to the characters of those whom he set apart to public offices; and advises him to be careful of his own health. Ch. v. 17—25.

1. The apostle enjoins it as a reasonable thing, as well as a divine precept, that the elders and

Ch. V. teachers of the church should have a competent and liberal support, ver. 17, 18.

Ver. 17. *Let the elders who preside*[1] *well be esteemed worthy of a liberal maintenance*[2], *especially those who labour in teaching the word*[3].

Let those grave and experienced persons who are chosen out of the Christian society to superintend its concerns, to appoint the proper seasons of assembling to regulate the order of public services, to manage the temporal affairs of the society, and to compose differences which may arise among its

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[1] *The elders who preside.*] Compare Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24, Rom. xii. 8, 1 Thess. v. 12. The presiding elder appointed the time and place of meeting when the Christians held their assemblies in private, through fear of persecution. They directed public worship; they settled which of the spiritual men were to pray or teach, and in what order; they decided controversies, 1 Cor. vi.; and they managed the temporal affairs of the society." See Benson and Macknight.

[2] *Liberal maintenance.*] διπλης τιμης, *double honour*, or, *price*. Matt. xxvii. 6. " double reward." Newcome, Wakefield. See ver. 3: *i. e.* a large reward, Matt. xv. 6, Acts xxviii. 10. It is an allusion to the portion of the first-born, Deut. xxi. 17. See also 2 Kings ii. 9, a double portion of the spirit of Elijah. " a liberal maintenance out of the public stock." Whitby. " *plus stipendii*." Rosenmuller.

[3] *Labour in teaching.*] Literally, " who labour in the word, and in teaching." Newcome. Some, who presided, did not teach, others were instructors as well as presidents. See Heb. xiii. 7. See Whitby's note. " It was not expected," says Dr. Priestley, " that all the elders of a church should teach; but notwithstanding this, they might be very well employed in attending to the good order of the society. These, however, would not in general require any assistance; but those who actually gave their time and labour to the church, so as to give little or no attention to any other business by which they might maintain themselves, would have a natural right to maintenance from those to whom their time and labour were devoted."

members, and who discharge the duties of their important office with discretion, and to the satisfaction of the church, be supported in decency and comfort from the public stock; and particularly those who are appointed to the honourable office of Christian instructors, and who are so much engaged in teaching the young and the ignorant, and in converting the heathen, that they have not time to attend to their own private concerns. It will be to the credit of the society, and to the furtherance of the gospel, that such persons should be treated with the respect due to their characters and labours; and that they should not be impeded in their work by the want of any thing requisite to their subsistence and comfort, nor taken off from their important employment by a necessary attention to their secular affairs. Ch. V. Ver. 17.

For the Scripture saith (Deut. xxv. 4), *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that is treading out the corn; and The labourer is worthy of his hire*[4]. Lev. xix. 13. Luke x. 7. 18.

The law of Moses humanely required, that the ox which was employed in treading out the corn should be at liberty to satisfy his own hunger; and it is a common observation, the reasonableness of

[4] *The labourer,* &c.] This observation occurs only Luke x. 7: hence some have inferred that the apostle quotes the gospel of Luke as of the same authority with the Pentateuch; but this is a precarious conclusion. It was probably a proverbial expression, and cited as such both by our Lord and the apostle. "*Extat quidem locus similis* Matt. x. 10. *An vero Paulus Evangelium Matthæi legerit valde dubium est.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. V. Ver. 18. which is obvious to every understanding, and which indeed was applied by Jesus himself to the very case that I am now stating, that 'the labourer is worthy of his hire,' and that a person who devotes his time and powers to the benefit of others has an equitable claim to a compensation for his services. And nothing can be more absurd or unreasonable than to suppose that the superintendants of Christian churches, and the teachers of the gospel, are not entitled equally with others to a just equivalent for their time and service.

2. The apostle directs Timothy how to act when accusations were brought against any of the elders of the church, ver. 19—21.

19. *Receive not an accusation against an elder, unless on* the testimony [1] *of two or three witnesses.*

It is of great importance that the characters of those who are appointed to the superintendance of the church, and whose office it is to instruct others in truth and duty, should be unspotted. Having then appointed proper persons to govern and instruct, do not lightly receive a charge against them;

[1] *Unless on* the testimony.] So Doddridge. "without two or three witnesses." Wakefield. "before." Public Version and Newcome. There is no good reason why the accusation should not be received unless in the presence of witnesses, but a very good reason why it should not be attended to unless it could be proved by a competent number of credible witnesses. —"Do not give ear to any thing which may stain their reputation, unless the matter can be attested by two or three credible witnesses: Deut. xix. 15, Matt. xviii. 16, John viii. 17." Benson.

and listen not to any reports to their disadvantage, if not confirmed by two or three credible witnesses, upon whose testimony you may safely rely. Ch. V. Ver. 19.

Rebuke offenders before all[2], *that others also may fear.* 20.

When you have obtained satisfactory evidence of the misconduct of any of the officers or teachers of the church, let their punishment be proportioned to the enormity of their offence, aggravated as it is by the publicity of their character and the dignity of their office, by the danger of their example, and by the occasion that it will give to the enemies of Christianity to reproach their religion. Rebuke them severely, and rebuke them publicly, not only that they may be made ashamed of their offence, and be brought to a due sense of their guilt, but that others also may see that no elevation of rank, or dignity of office, can protect an offender from deserved censure, and may take warning to avoid a similar conduct, lest they fall into similar disgrace.

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[2] *Before all.*] "This was the custom of the synagogue. *Vitringa de vet. Synagog.* p. 729." Benson. The connexion shows that the apostle is speaking of presbyters and officers of the church.—"*quos coram ceteris presbyteris omnibus coarguendos jubet apostolus.*" Rosenmuller.—"This shows," says Dr. Priestley, "how attentive the early Christians were to the good conduct of the members of their societies; and in their situation among unbelievers it was peculiarly necessary, but it is certainly highly proper even in our circumstances. It is a bad symptom of the decline of the spirit of religion, when the members of Christian societies consider themselves as entirely detached from each other, and feel no interest in their good or bad conduct."

Ch. V. Ver. 21. *I strictly charge* thee, *before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the chosen messengers*[1], *that*

[1] *The chosen messengers.*] εκλεκτων αγγελων. The word *angel* is repeatedly used in the New Testament to signify a messenger, Matt. xi. 10, Luke vii. 24. The disciples of John are called *messengers:* in the original, *angels.* Luke ix. 52. The disciples who were sent to announce the approach of Christ are called *messengers:* Gr. "angels." 1 Cor. xi. 10, the women are required to wear a veil, because of the angels, *i. e. messengers;* who were sent from the assemblies of the men to attend those of the women, and before whom it would be indecorous to appear without a veil. See the note on this passage. James ii. 25, the spies sent by Moses are called αγγελοι, *messengers.* 1 Tim. iii. 16, he appeared to angels: *i. e. messengers,* to his *apostles.* See note *in loc.* Gal. i. 14, "ye received me as an angel (*i. e.* a *messenger*) of God." The angels of the churches in the first three chapters of the Apocalypse, are universally understood to signify the ministers of the seven churches; and Mr. Wakefield well translates the word αγγελος in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews *messenger,* explaining it of the former prophets and messengers of God. See Schleusner *in verb.* The elect angels, therefore, are those eminent believers who were selected to accompany and assist the apostle, who knew Timothy's situation, and who were no doubt very solicitous that he should conduct himself with prudence, firmness, and fidelity, in discharging the duties of his important office. In their presence, therefore, as well as in that of God and Christ, the apostle urges upon his beloved disciple and substitute his solemn charge.

This interpretation, which appears to be so obvious, so intelligible, and so appropriate, seems to have escaped all the commentators, who with one consent interpret the phrase as of spirits superior to mankind; of whose existence even, we have no certain information, much less can we know any thing of their orders and laws, of their offices and employments: who, if they exist at all, and it is indeed probable that millions of orders of intelligent beings exist in the boundless universe, in all probability know as little of what is passing in this diminutive planet, as we know of them. At least, we have no evidence that they know any thing about, or, have any concern with this world and its inhabitants. But that the apostle here refers to these superior classes of beings, appears to have been the opinion of Erasmus, Grotius, Crellius, Slichtingius, Whitby,

thou observe these things *without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality*[2]. Ch. V. Ver. 21.

The office which I have now assigned thee requires great resolution and fortitude to perform well. But the duties of it are indispensable in the situation in which you are placed, considering the character which you support at Ephesus, and the gifts and powers which you possess; and therefore I strictly charge you, as in the presence of God, the searcher of hearts, and of Jesus Christ, whose minister you are, and at whose judgement seat you will be called to give an account of your conduct; and likewise in the presence and with the concurrence of those faithful messengers and preachers of

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Benson, Newcome, Wakefield, Rosenmuller, &c. &c. Dr. Priestley himself swims with the stream. "This (says he in his note upon the text) is speaking according to the oriental style; considering God as a great prince, attended by his angels or ministering servants. As acting under the inspection of this great being, thus magnificently attended, Paul gives this solemn charge to Timothy." The reason of this great and universal mistake appears to be, that the early commentators, conceiving of Jesus Christ as a great superangelic being, naturally enough imagined that the apostle referred to angels or beings of a superior nature to mankind. But those critics of the present day who entertain more correct views of the person of Christ, will easily discern how much more apposite the expression is, if it be interpreted of those delegates of the churches, who often accompanied the apostle in his journeys, and some of whom probably remained with Timothy, when he was left at Ephesus.

[2] *Prejudice—partiality.*] See Wakefield.—"without preferring one man before another." Newcome.—"προκριμα, judgement formed before the matter has been duly examined; προσκλισις, leaning to one side. Partiality is judgement guided by favour; prejudice is judgement dictated by hatred." Macknight.

Ch. V. Ver. 21. the gospel who have been selected by the church as my associates in labours and in dangers, and who are anxiously solicitous for your credit and success; that you pay due regard to the directions that I have given, and this, without prejudice or personal pique on the one hand, or unbecoming partiality on the other; that you conduct yourself in these circumstances with a firmness and fidelity which becomes the faithful minister of Christ, who has no other concern than to perform his duty without fear or affection, or any improper bias whatever, and without regard to any personal consequences.

3. The apostle gives to Timothy a strict charge to be very careful in inquiring into the characters of those men who might be recommended to public offices, and he introduces a friendly hint to take care of his own health, ver. 22—25.

22. *Put thy hands*[1] *on no man precipitately, and be not a partaker in the sins of others. Keep thyself pure.*

As it is better to prevent offences than to punish them, I advise you to be extremely circumspect with regard to the characters of those who are recommended to offices of dignity and importance in the church. When any are selected by their fellow-

[1] *Put thy hands.*] Dr. Macknight observes, that "this is one instance among others that in the apostolic age men were ordained to ecclesiastical functions by imposition of the hands of those who were in the ministry before them."

Christians, and presented to you for approbation and confirmation in the office of elder or deacon, by imposition of hands and prayer, first inquire diligently into their moral conduct, and do not, by hastily introducing into office persons of doubtful character, render yourself in a considerable degree chargeable with the evil consequences which will inevitably follow, if men of mean abilities and immoral lives are made rulers and teachers in the church. Let your whole conduct in this, and in all respects, be spotless and free from reproach. Ch. V. Ver. 22.

Do not any longer drink water only, *but use a little wine, for the sake of thy stomach and thy frequent infirmities*[2]. 23.

Having hinted at your personal duty, it reminds me of observing, that one important duty is, to take care of your health, without which it is impossible for you to go through the fatigues of your office; and, that you may not exhaust yourself by your exertions, I advise you to indulge yourself in the moderate use of wine, and not to drink water only.

The sins of some men[3] *are notorious, leading on* 24.

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[2] *Do not,* &c.] Sir Norton Knatchbull thinks, that as this verse interrupts the sense, it was introduced by the apostle as a postscript in the margin, and by some officious transcriber inserted into the text. See Doddridge, and Bowyer's *Conjectural Emendations.* Some think that the apostle gently reproves Timothy as too much addicted to an ascetic life.

[3] *The sins of some men.*] See ver. 22. *q. d.* "In setting men apart to the ministry, you may be deceived without guilt. The sins of some are manifest before the final judgement; but others so conceal them that they will not appear till the sen-

Ch. V. Ver. 24. *to condemnation, whereas* the sins *of others follow them.*

But to return to the subject of appointing persons to ecclesiastical offices; I would observe, that it is not always easy to discern the real characters of men. Some persons are notorious offenders, whom it may be hoped that the church would never elect; and whom, if they were presented, you would immediately reject, as men whose characters allowed no room for hesitation. But there are others, whose vices are concealed, whose real characters it is difficult to detect, in whom, after the greatest circumspection you can use, you may be deceived, and whose crimes may perhaps not be completely developed till the final judgement. If you should happen after due inquiry to institute such persons into the office of teachers and preachers of the gospel, whatever injury the church may sustain, your conscience will be clear.

25. *So also the good works* of some *are manifest, and those that are otherwise cannot be concealed.*

The same observation may be applied to persons of an opposite character. Some are eminently virtuous; their piety, their benevolence, their habitual regard to God and duty are so conspicuous, that calumny itself cannot fasten any scandal and reproach upon them. In others, equally animated

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tence of their judge." Newcome. I rather prefer the interpretation of Doddridge: "leading on to pass judgement on them without any difficulty." Dr. Benson gives a similar paraphrase.

by a principle of rectitude, their virtues are less conspicuous, they live in the obscurity of retirement, or they studiously conceal from human eyes the good they do. Such virtue, however, cannot be wholly or long concealed. By diligent inquiry you may perhaps find them out, and advance them to those posts of dignity and importance to which their merit entitles them, but from which their modesty and humility would keep them at a distance. At all events, how little soever their merits may be known and acknowledged in the present state, they will not fail to be brought to light and crowned with honour in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and all shall be rewarded according to their works. Ch. V. Ver. 25.

SECTION XI.

The apostle requires that Christian slaves be taught to yield due obedience to their masters, and animadverts with great severity upon those false teachers who, from mercenary views, taught a different doctrine. Ch. vi. 1—10. Ch. VI.

1. He requires that slaves be instructed to yield obedience to their masters, and by no means to fail in due respect to those of them who were converted to the Christian faith. Ch. vi. 1, 2.

Let all who are under the yoke of servitude[1] Ver. 1.

[1] *Let all who are under the yoke of servitude.*] Literally, "as

Ch. VI. Ver. 1. *esteem their masters worthy of all honour; that the name of God and* his *doctrine may not be calumniated*[1].

Many of the zealots for the law, in order to ingratiate themselves with, and to make gain of, their proselytes, represent Christian slaves as released by the profession of the Christian religion from all obligation to serve Christian masters. But do you, Timothy, teach a different doctrine, and let it be known that Christianity makes no change in men's civil relations; but as it requires humanity on the part of the master, it equally enjoins obedience and fidelity on the part of the slave. I require that this doctrine should be inculcated upon Christian slaves; and that they should be taught to regard it as an indispensable duty to serve their masters with honesty and zeal: that so the doctrine which God has revealed for the universal reception and salva-

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many slaves as are under the yoke." See Newcome. It was a doctrine of the pharisaic Jews, that proselytes were released from all antecedent civil and even natural relations. And it is not improbable that some of the Jewish converts might carry the same principle into the Christian community. The Judaizing zealots probably taught, that by the profession of Christianity slaves were emancipated from Christian masters. Against this principle the apostle always enters his strong protest; and teaches that the profession of Christianity makes no difference in the civil relations of men. 1 Cor. vii. 17—24. The apostle no doubt well knew that the principles of genuine Christianity would eventually lead to the utter extermination of slavery; but the process was to be voluntary and gradual, not violent and immediate. See Benson, Macknight, Priestley, &c.

[1] *Calumniated.*] "*evil spoken of.* As if it set men free from civil obligations." Newcome.

tion of mankind, may not be misrepresented and calumniated, as introducing disorder and confusion into civil society. Ch. VI. Ver. 1.

And let not those who have believing masters think lightly of them, *because they are brethren*[2], *but serve* them *the more* willingly, *because those who are partakers of the benefit*[3] *are believers and beloved.* 2.

Neither let Christian slaves imagine that their masters, though Christians, are under any obligation to restore them to liberty; or that because they are equally members of the great family of believers, possessed of the same privileges, heirs of the same eternal inheritance, they are for this reason released from civil subjection, and are entitled to treat their masters with neglect and contempt. Let Christian slaves therefore be as prompt in their obedience to the orders of Christian as of heathen masters. And indeed let the consideration, that the masters whom they serve, and who are benefited by their in-

[2] *Brethren.*] "Though brethren, and upon a level with their slaves in a religious account, they remain superior, and just as they were in a civil and temporal account. See note on Philemon, ver. 12, 14, 16." Benson.

[3] *Partakers of the benefit:*] *i. e.* of the service of the slave. See Benson, Newcome, and Macknight. Dr. Benson observes, that "ευεργεσια is a word never used to express the blessings of the gospel." The public version is, "because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit:" *q. d.* do them service, the rather because they are partakers of the blessing of the gospel, in common with you their slaves. This also is the sense given in Mr. Wakefield's translation, "but serve them, as believers and beloved, partakers of the same benefit, with a more hearty service." But Dr. Benson's interpretation seems preferable.

Ch. VI. Ver. 2. dustry, are believers in Christ, and beloved of God, and that they are bound by the Christian law to treat those under their authority with humanity and brotherly kindness, be an additional motive to still greater alacrity and zeal in the performance of duty.

2. The apostle expresses great displeasure at those who taught a contrary doctrine, ver. 3—5.

—2, 3. *These* things *teach and exhort. If any one teach otherwise, and adhere not*[1] *to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doc-*

[1] *Adhere not.*] προσερχεται, "consent not." Public Version. "attend not." Wakefield.—Dr. Bentley conjectures that the true reading was probably προσεχεται, or προσεχει, as προσεχειν λογοις is a known phrase both in sacred and profane writers: see 2 Pet. i. 19; Acts viii. 6, xvi. 4; Heb. ii. 1; Tit. i. 14; 1 Tim. i. 3, 4: whereas there is no precedent of a similar application of προσερχομαι. And he conjectures that some manuscript may possibly be found which contains this reading. See *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, part i., p. 72, and Benson *in loc.* No such manuscript, however, has yet been discovered: nevertheless, the conjecture is so probable, that it is mentioned by Griesbach in his second edition; and has been adopted expressly by Benson and Doddridge, and virtually by Archbishop Newcome. Nor does there appear to be any valid reason why conjectural criticism should not occasionally be applied to the sacred writings, as it is allowed to be to profane authors; for it is not to be supposed that all transcribers and copyists were inspired. It ought, however, to be very cautiously applied to texts which are of weight in theological controversy. See John i. 1, Rom. ix. 5, and the notes in the *Improved Version.* Rosenmuller denies the necessity of adopting Bentley's conjecture, and appeals to Philo as using the phrase προσελθειν τινι γνωμη, for acceding to an opinion. And Schleusner refers to Munthe's *Obs. Philolog. e Diod. Sic.* for a similar authority: but no example of this use of the word has been produced out of the New Testament or the Septuagint.

trine which is according to godliness, he is vain[2], Ch. VI. Ver. 4.
and knoweth nothing, but is raving[3] *about questions and verbal disputes*[4]. *From which arise envy, contention, calumnies, unjust suspicions, perverse debates*[5] *of men whose minds are corrupted and adverse to the truth, who regard gain as piety*[6]. 5.

This doctrine, concerning the duties of slaves, I require you to teach and inculcate upon all of that description who embrace the faith of Christ; and exhort them to behave accordingly. And do not suffer any to be seduced into a profession of Chris-

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[2] *He is vain.*] τετυφωται. "he is besotted." Wakefield, 2d edit. He once approved of the reading in the Æthiopic Version, τετυφλωται, *he is blind;* but upon further consideration gave it up. It is a reading supported by one manuscript only, and that of no great account.

[3] *Raving.*] νοσων, "raving and delirious in a fever." Doddridge; who observes, that the word expresses the effect of a disease on the mind, in which view *raving* appears a more proper word than *doting*. "he is sick of the wrangling disease." Bishop Wilkins's *Sermons*, p. 73.

[4] *Questions and verbal disputes.*] "The Greek may be resolved into ζητησεις και μαχας περι λογων. Perhaps questions were raised concerning the extent of liberty under the gospel. The apostle treats the subject with warmth, because some had maintained opinions about it which caused the religion of Christ to be evil-spoken of." Newcome.

[5] *Perverse debates.*] "διατριβαι are disputes in the philosophical schools; διαπαρατριβαι are perverse disputes." Macknight. See also Rosenmuller.

[6] *Gain as piety.*] ευσεβειαν. See ch. iii. 16. At the end of this verse the received text adds, "αφιστασο απο των τοιουτων, *from such turn away.*" This clause is omitted in the Alexandrine, Cambridge, and other manuscripts, and in many ancient versions, and is not necessary to the sense. See Griesbach, who nevertheless retains it in the text. Newcome marks it as doubtful.

Ch. VI. Ver. 5.

tianity by the false expectation that they shall thereby be released from their present degraded condition in society. If any person teach a doctrine contrary to this, if the zealot for the law artfully preaches up the immediate emancipation of Christian slaves, and thus departs from that wise and salutary doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of true and rational religion, which, not interfering with the civil states of men, is calculated gradually to ameliorate their condition, by infusing milder principles and gentler habits, both into individuals and communities; if any man, I say, thus departs from the true doctrine and the genuine law of Christ, he is chargeable with a very criminal degree of vanity and self-conceit, in presuming to set up his own erroneous opinions in opposition to the truth of the gospel; he discovers a deplorable ignorance of the true genius and spirit of the Christian religion. If he is in earnest, he must be out of his mind; he raves like a man in the delirium of fever, who is utterly incapable of forming a deliberate judgement; and introduces ferocious disputes about words that have no meaning. The consequences of this haughty and disputatious spirit are very pernicious; it gives rise to envy and strife, to the use of harsh and abusive language concerning those who differ in opinion, and to unjust suspicions of their sincerity, because they will not submit to the decision of these self-constituted instructors. Such a conduct likewise gives occasion to pernicious debates among men of corrupt minds, who are not

desirous of discovering and diffusing truth, but who endeavour by sophistical reasonings to blind the understandings of others, and who have no regard whatever for religion, any further than as it is the means of enriching themselves. Ch. VI. Ver. 5.

3. The apostle represents the folly of an excessive eagerness after unlawful gain, ver. 6—8.

But piety with a sufficiency[1] *is great gain.* 6.

The belief of the Christian religion, and a title to its invaluable blessings, is the greatest treasure that a man can possess; and if, in addition to this, he acquires a decent competence of the blessings of life, he has reason to regard himself as possessing every thing that a wise man can desire.

For we brought nothing into the world, and it is 7.
evident that we can carry nothing out. Having 8.
therefore food and covering[2]*, let us be content with these.*

We come into the world in a naked and destitute condition, and in a short time we must leave it in as naked and destitute a state as we came into it. It is therefore great folly to indulge unreasonable anxiety with regard to the accommodations we shall possess during our short transitory

[1] *Sufficiency.*] αυταρκειας. So Diodati, Macknight; Wakefield, who observes, that what follows justifies this translation. See 2 Cor. ix. 8. *Piety* (ευσεβεια) here, as in the preceding verse, stands for the whole of religion. See ch. iii. 16.

[2] *Covering.*] "σκεπασματα· this word expresses clothes, lodging, and covering of every sort." Macknight, Wakefield.—"Σκ. *sunt tegumenta, domus, tecta, æque ac vestes.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. VI. Ver. 8. residence here, and much more to use any dishonourable means of improving our condition. It is far more becoming to be content and thankful for what little we may possess: and if we are supplied by the good providence of God with decent apparel, with convenient habitations, and with plain and wholesome food, with this provision we ought to be content and thankful.

4. The apostle further represents the pernicious consequences of a covetous temper, especially in those who profess to be teachers of the gospel, ver. 9, 10.

9. *But they who are determined to be rich*[1] *fall into the temptation and snare of many senseless and mischievous desires*[2], *which plunge men into ruin and destruction.*

The men whose sole aim it is to acquire wealth, and who are willing to sacrifice every thing to this mean and unworthy pursuit, may perhaps attain their wish: but in the prosecution of their purpose they will expose themselves to many temptations to violate the rules of justice and integrity, and in the possession of their object they will be tempted to indulge in those licentious gratifications to

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[1] *Determined to be rich.*] "resolved to be rich at all adventures." Benson; who remarks in his note, "That this was peculiarly levelled at the false teachers, the whole strain of the apostle's discourse is a proof." Compare ver. 5, 10, 11.

[2] *Into the temptation,* &c.] For this construction see Wakefield.

which great opulence furnishes so easy access, and which will eventually overwhelm them in disgrace and destruction. Ch. VI. Ver. 9.

For the love of money is the root of all mischief; which some[3] *having vehemently coveted, have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through*[4] *with many sorrows.* 10.

Where the love of gain is the predominant principle, the ruling passion in the breast, it is impossible to enumerate all the mischiefs which result from it. Where this sordid passion takes possession of the teachers of the Christian religion, it leads them to sacrifice the genuine truths of the gospel to the prejudices of their hearers; and to teach what they know to be false, because they find it profitable. This, though it wears the semblance of wisdom, will be found eventually to have been the greatest folly. For sooner or later they will be roused to a sense of their guilt; and the reproaches of their consciences, like the wounds of a dagger, will fill their hearts with insupportable anguish and dismay.

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[3] *Which some,* &c.] "Observe that ης, attracted by φιλαργυριας, agrees in sense with αργυριε, contained in φιλαργυριας." Newcome.

[4] *Pierced themselves through.*] περιεπειραν. "π. undiquaque infigo et perforo; ex περι undiquaque, et πειρω transfigo." Schleusner. "stabbed themselves from head to foot, so as to be pierced through and through." Macknight; Doddridge, who observes, "that this happily expresses the innumerable outrages done to conscience by those madmen who have taken up this fatal resolution, that they will at all adventures be rich."

SECTION XII.

Ch. VI. *THE APOSTLE solemnly charges Timothy to be faithful and courageous in discharging his office; he advises him to remind the rich of their peculiar duties; he again renews his charge of fidelity, and concludes the epistle with commending him to the divine blessing.* Ch. vi. 11—22.

1. The apostle warns Timothy to avoid the evil practices of the false teachers, and exhorts him to attend to every branch of duty, ver. 11, 12.

Ver. 11. *But do thou, O man of God*[1], *flee these* things, *and pursue righteousness, piety, fidelity, love, patience, meekness.*

I have faithfully represented to you the extreme danger of an eager attachment to riches, especially in a minister of the gospel; and now I solemnly charge you, O Timothy, as one who sustains a sacred character, and who has not only been solemnly set apart to the office of the ministry, but furnished with supernatural qualifications for the discharge of it, to avoid every appearance of a mean and mercenary spirit. Practise universal virtue, live in the fear and love of God, adhere to truth in your declarations, and be faithful to your promises; culti-

[1] *O man of God:*] *i. e.* "minister of Christ. See 2 Tim. iii. 17." Newcome. "*Man of God* signifies an inspired person or prophet. 2 Pet. iii. 21." Benson.

vate universal active benevolence, bear with patience affliction and persecution, and cherish a forbearing and forgiving spirit. Ch. VI. Ver. 11.

Maintain the honourable contest of faith[2], *lay hold on eternal life, to which thou hast been invited, and hast confessed*[3] *a good confession before many witnesses.* 12.

Though I earnestly recommend meekness and forbearance, I am far from desiring you to desert the cause of truth; on the contrary, contend earnestly for the purity of the faith, and do not yield in any point to those who would corrupt the simplicity of the gospel by the introduction either of Jewish rites, or mysterious philosophical speculations. Persist with undaunted resolution in this honourable contest, and thus secure your title to eternal life. This is the glorious prize for which you have been invited to contend; and as you have in many instances made a noble and a public stand in defence of truth, I trust that your future conduct will not disgrace your past transactions, nor sully the reputation you have already acquired.

2. He enforces the charge by reminding the evangelist of the approaching judgement, ver. 13—16.

[2] *Maintain*, &c.] Dr. Benson observes, "This is not an allusion to the life of a soldier engaged in wars and battles, but to the contentions in the Grecian games; which is a common allusion with St. Paul. 1 Cor. ix. 24—27, Phil. iii. 12—14, 2 Tim. iii. 5. See West's *Dissertation on the Olympic Games.*"

[3] *And hast confessed.*] ὡμολογησας. Macknight says, that the aorist has the force of an imperative, and renders it "confess a good confession."

Ch. VI. Ver. 13. *In the presence of God*[1], *who giveth life to all; and of Jesus Christ*[2], *who before Pontius Pilate* 14. *witnessed a good confession, I charge thee that thou keep this commandment unspotted, unblameable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*[3].

So deeply am I impressed with the importance of the charge which I have now given you, of maintaining a temperate yet firm adherence to Christian truth, that I would urge it upon you by every consideration that can interest your feelings or excite your attention. In the presence of God, of that God from whom all derive their existence, by whose power the virtuous will be raised to immortality,

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[1] *In the presence of God.*] Dr. Benson supposes, that in ch. v. 21 there is an allusion to the splendour and magnificence of the Persian court, and the same allusion is resumed in this text; but, for the reasons assigned in the note upon the former passage, the supposition seems to be needless and unsupported, both there and here.

[2] *And of Jesus Christ.*] There appears to have been a peculiar personal presence of Christ with his church, and especially with the apostles, and with Paul in particular, during the apostolic age, which since that time has been withdrawn, at least in its sensible manifestations; to which presence the apostle here alludes. Indeed the apostle always appears to speak and act as if Jesus were personally present with him. See 2 Cor. xii. 8—10, Matt. xxviii. 20, and the *Improved Version*, and Bishop Pearce on the text. Also Mr. Lindsey's *Sequel to his Apology*, p. 74.

[3] *Until the appearing.*] Grotius observes, that the apostle expresses himself as though he thought it possible that Timothy might live till Christ's second appearance; and refers to his own notes upon 1 Cor. xv. 52, 2 Cor. v. 2, 3, 1 Thess. iv. 15. So Rosenmuller: "*Loquitur Paulus ad Timotheum tanquam qui vivere posset ad tempus, quo Christus ad judicium venturus esset.*"

and who can, and will, infinitely compensate to all his faithful servants every sacrifice which they can make in the cause of truth and duty; and in the presence of Jesus Christ, our glorious chief, from whom both you and I received our commission, who himself exhibited an eminent example of firm and undaunted fidelity, when in the presence of the Roman governor he boldly avowed the important truth, that he was born to reign (John xviii. 37), which he knew would be immediately followed by a sentence of crucifixion, I now most solemnly charge and enjoin, that you preserve the truth of the Christian doctrine without any stain of error in principle, without any reproach of immorality in conduct, as long as you live, and as far as lies in your power, till the day of the second appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, to raise the dead and to judge the world: when fidelity tried and approved shall receive an ample reward. Ch. VI. Ver. 14.

Which in its proper season he will exhibit, who 15.
is *the blessed and the only potentate, the King of*
kings and Lord of lords, who alone hath immor- 16.
tality, inhabiting inaccessible light, whom no man
hath seen, or can see[4], *to whom be everlasting*
honour and dominion[5]. *Amen.*

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[4] *Light inaccessible,* &c.] Dr. Benson very probably conjectures that there is an allusion here to the schechinah or cloud of glory upon the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies, to which no one had access but the high-priest.—"Lucem inaccessam inhabitans: *sensus est, cujus majestatem nemo comprehendere mente potest.*" Rosenmuller.

[5] *Everlasting dominion.*] "*qui summo honore est dignus, et*

Ch. VI. Ver. 16. To this awful and magnificent appearance of our divine master we look forward with joyful expectation, though concerning the precise period of its arrival we may be left in ignorance. Nevertheless, we are assured that it will be brought to pass, at the destined and the fittest season, by that omnipotent Being who alone possesses essential power, whose infinite happiness is a proof and pledge of the ultimate felicity of the whole rational creation, whose throne is highly exalted above all earthly potentates, all created authorities and powers, from whom all beings derive their existence, their percipient and active faculties, and all the shadow of dignity and authority which they possess; who is indeed the only proper agent in the universe, governing and disposing all things by his own wise, benevolent, and sovereign will; who alone possesses in his own essence immutable immortal life, and who alone can communicate immortality and happiness to whomsoever he pleases; whose nature and attributes are absolutely incomprehensible, and will ever remain unknown to the most exalted and capacious of created intelligences, to whom belongs universal dominion, and to whom be ascribed everlasting honour. Amen.

3. The apostle desires that Timothy would remind the rich of their important duties, ver. 17—19.

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cujus imperium est æternum. κράτος *sæpe est* imperium. *Vid. Hesychium.*" Rosenmuller.

Them that are rich in this world charge[1] *that they be not elated in mind, that they do not trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God*[2]*, who richly giveth us all things to enjoy.* Ch. VI. Ver. 17.

Though not many in the superior ranks of life can be induced to embrace the humble and despised religion of Jesus, yet as there are some of this description at Ephesus, it is right that they should be informed of the duties which our holy religion enjoins. Charge them therefore not to think too highly of themselves on account of their wealth, not to place their confidence in that which is so little able to afford true satisfaction, and which may vanish from them before they are aware, and when they flatter themselves that they are most secure. But let them learn to put their trust, not in senseless idols, but in that God who lives from everlasting to everlasting, and who is the fountain of life and happiness; who is kind and liberal to all his human offspring, and from whom we all derive the blessings and comforts that we possess.

That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. 18.

Charge them further to make a good use of their

[1] *Charge,* &c.] Dr. Benson observes, that "Timothy might perhaps be afraid to insist upon such things from those who by their riches were persons of some distinction, and therefore the apostle interposes his authority. "And it has been remarked that this advice to the rich clearly proves that there was no community of goods at Ephesus." See Doddridge.

[2] *The living God.*] "not in Diana, nor any other of the heathen gods made and provided for by mankind." Benson.

Ch. VI. Ver. 18. wealth, to abound in acts of kindness, to employ their riches in honourable and useful undertakings, to impart liberally to those who are in want, to concur cheerfully in every pious and benevolent design, and to contribute generously towards carrying it into execution.

19. *Laying up in store for themselves a good security*[1] *against the time to come, that they may obtain that which is the true life*[2].

Tell them that, by employing their wealth to the purposes of beneficence, and in promoting the interest of truth and virtue, they are laying out their riches to the best account, they are treasuring up for themselves an inexhaustible store of that most valuable of all possessions, peace of mind, pleasing reflections, and joyful hopes; and thus, that they will not only ensure the truest enjoyment of the

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[1] *A good security.*] Gr. θεμελιον, "foundation." Le Clerc proposes κειμηλιον, *a treasure:* but for this there is no authority. Θεμα occurs Tobit iv. 9, "by almsgiving thou treasurest up to thyself a good deposit." "a good provision." Wakefield. —Archbishop Tillotson (*Sermons*, fol. vol. i. serm. 7,) observes, that θεμελιος "is sometimes used for an instrument of contract, whereby two parties do oblige themselves mutually to each other."—"*Omne notat, quod certum est, nec facile perit.*" Schleusner. In this sense the word seems to be used 2 Tim. ii. 19; and this, as Dr. Benson observes in his judicious note upon that text, "affords the most satisfactory interpretation here. For if θεμελιος signifies a bond or article of security for some future glorious possession, then treasuring it up will be easily understood. But 'treasuring up a foundation' sounds oddly, and is not easy to be understood." "*Durius paullo:* q. d. *cumulantes divitias perpetuo duraturas.*" Rosenmuller.

[2] *The true life.*] The received text reads αιωνιε, *eternal*, but the best copies read οντως, which is adopted by Griesbach and Newcome.

present transitory state of existence, but will acquire a title to that glorious inheritance which is revealed by Christ, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and will never fade away, and which alone deserves the name of a true, substantial and happy life. Ch. VI. Ver. 19.

4. The apostle renews the solemn charge of fidelity to his trust, and concludes the epistle with recommending the evangelist to the divine blessing, ver. 20, 21.

O Timothy! guard thy *deposit*[3]*: avoiding profane babblings*[4] *and oppositions of science, falsely so called; which some pretending to, have erred concerning the faith. The favour* of God[5] *be with thee. Amen.* 20. 21.

O Timothy! my pupil, my son in the true faith, and my representative in office, I conclude this long epistle with the solemn charge, that you will with the utmost care, resolution and perseverance, preserve pure and uncorrupted that sublime and holy

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[3] Thy *deposit.*] " the doctrine that is committed to thy trust." Newcome. Dr. Benson observes, that " the apostle has kept this point in view through the whole epistle, and now sums it up at parting."

[4] *Profane babblings.*] κενοφωνιας, " f. καινοφωνιας, profane *new-coined* words, as, Vulg. *Vocum novitates.* Chrysostom, Tertullian, *et al. in* Wetstein." Bowyer.

[5] *The favour* of God.] So Newcome supplies the ellipsis. " *Nempe Dei Patris et Christi.*" Rosenmuller.

The Postscript dates the epistle from Laodicea the metropolis of Phrygia Pacatiana; and some copies, from Athens. These postscripts are of no authority, and are wanting in the best manuscripts; but they at least show the early prevalence of an opinion that the Epistle was not written from Macedonia: and consequently an early different reading of ch. i. 3.

Ch. VI. Ver. 21. doctrine which is committed to thy trust, of which trust thou must hereafter give an account. Avoid with the utmost circumspection, on the one hand, those Jewish innovations which would impose the rites of Moses upon the disciples of Christ, and encroach upon the liberties of the Gentile church; and, on the other, guard against those abstruse speculations of heathen philosophy, which, being hostile to the simplicity of the gospel doctrine, would introduce mysterious and unintelligible notions to recommend Christianity to those pretenders to science who cannot be satisfied with a system which common people can comprehend. This is a snare in which some of the teachers of the gospel have been already entangled, and while they have involved themselves in the subtleties of useless science, they have deviated from the simplicity of the Christian faith.

Being thus faithfully warned, keep strictly upon the watch against those corruptions of the Christian doctrine; adhere steadily to the simplicity of evangelical truth; and may you enjoy in their highest purity the blessings of that gospel, which is the free and inestimable gift of God by Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE SECOND EPISTLE

OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

T I M O T H Y.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY is one of those apostolical writings, concerning the genuineness and authenticity of which there has never been any dispute.

It is certain, that it was written from Rome while the apostle was a prisoner there; but a question has arisen, whether this epistle was written during the apostle's first or second imprisonment; and likewise, whether Timothy at that time resided at Ephesus, or at some other place.

It is the current tradition of antiquity, that Paul was imprisoned at Rome twice. The first time was about A.D. 61, when he was sent thither by Festus after his appeal to Cæsar, of which an account is

given in the history of the Acts of the Apostles. At that time Luke was his companion; and the apostle, after he had obtained a hearing before the emperor, was permitted to reside two years in his own house under the guard of a soldier. Here Luke's history closes: but the tradition of antiquity is, that after he had obtained his liberty, he visited the churches which he had planted in Greece and Asia, after which he returned again to Rome, where having converted the emperor's cupbearer, he was by Nero's order seized and put to death. This event is commonly believed to have taken place nearly at the same time when that profligate prince excited a cruel persecution against the Christians under pretence that they had set fire to the city, and in order to screen himself from the charge [1].

The apostle writes to his friend, ch. iv. 8: "I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course." From these strong expressions, which appear to indicate an expectation of speedy dissolution, many have inferred that this is the last epistle which the apostle wrote, and that it must have been indited a very short time before his death. But that this conclusion is unfounded, is evident from other passages in the epistle, which plainly indicate the apostle's expectation of the further prolongation of his life and labours. "Do thy diligence," says he, ver. 21, "to come to me before

[1] See Lardner's *History of the Apostles and Evangelists*, ch. xi. *ad fin.*

winter: The cloak, or portmanteau, which I left at Troas with Carpus, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments, ver. 13. Take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry," ver. 11. These directions clearly prove that the apostle expected to live till Timothy and Mark could come, and that he should make use of the articles which Timothy was desired to bring. Also, that he should employ the two evangelists as his coadjutors in the Christian ministry at Rome, which is evidently inconsistent with the expectation of immediate martyrdom, and likewise with the probable situation of the apostle in his supposed second imprisonment. The apostle therefore seems to have intended nothing more by the expressions above mentioned than that he was now advanced in years, and that his season of active service was almost over. He might also be apprehensive that he should remain a prisoner for life; and that, though he was for the present reprieved, and it might be some time before he was summoned to appear again at the imperial tribunal, the issue of his second appearance would be fatal[2].

Upon the whole, therefore, the opinion concerning the date of this epistle which was held by Dr.

[2] This is the more probable, as it is certain that appearances were judged to have been very unfavourable when he was summoned to make his first defence, 2 Tim. iv. 16. And towards the close of his first imprisonment, when upon the whole he expected to be released, yet he appears to have been not without some apprehensions of a contrary issue. See Phil. i. 20—25, ii. 17, 23, 24.

Lardner and many other learned men appears to me the most probable: viz. that it was written in the spring of A.D. 61, near the commencement of the apostle's first imprisonment[1], and soon after he had obtained an audience of Nero; in consequence of which he was permitted to reside in a house of his own, to which all his friends had liberty of access. In confirmation of this supposition it may be remarked, that it appears from ch. iv. 11, that Luke was with him when he wrote this epistle;

[1] The principal authorities in favour of this date of the epistle are Lightfoot, Baronius, Estius, Hammond, Witsius, Grotius, Rosenmuller, Lardner, and Priestley. On the other side are Whitby, Doddridge, Benson, Macknight, and Paley. The arguments upon which the advocates for a later date of the epistle lay the principal stress are, 1.) The strong language of the apostle, ch. iv. 6—8. 2.) The apostle does not, as in his other epistles, express any expectation of release; but, ch. iv. 18, only that the Lord would deliver him from every evil work, and preserve him to his heavenly kingdom. But if this epistle was written at the beginning of the imprisonment, he might be very doubtful of its issue. 3.) Ch. iv. 20, Erastus abode at Corinth. What need was there to inform Timothy of this, who was with him when he left Corinth? Acts xx., and must have known that Erastus staid behind. 4.) Ibid. Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. Trophimus was with Paul at Miletus, and accompanied him to Jerusalem, Acts xx. Ans. Beza and Grotius for *Miletum* are inclined to read *Melita*; but Lightfoot and Lardner rather infer from Acts xxvii. 2, 7, that the ship in which Paul was, touched at Miletus. But surely in this case Timothy would have met the apostle at Miletus, or at least he must have heard of Trophimus long before Paul wrote. Upon the whole, though the two last objections may not be easily obviated, the evidence appears to preponderate greatly in favour of the epistle having been written during the first imprisonment. In fact, as Lardner observes, we have no evidence of his ever being imprisoned a second time; and least of all, that he would be allowed time to write and to receive an answer to his letter. If the apostle had been arrested during the rage of Nero's persecution, he would have been almost immediately put to death.

and though we are sure that this evangelist accompanied him in his first imprisonment, we have no evidence whatever that he was with him when he returned to Rome. Also, ch. iii. 11, the apostle reminds Timothy of his persecutions at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, but makes no allusion to his former imprisonment at Rome, which he could hardly have failed to have done, had this epistle been written during his second confinement there. It cannot be doubted that Timothy hastened to Rome immediately upon the receipt of this letter; and this circumstance will account for the mention of his name, together with that of the apostle, in the epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon; these epistles having been written a short time before his release from his first imprisonment. Mark having also accompanied Timothy, and remaining with the apostle, his name occurs in the salutation to Philemon, ver. 24. Demas, who when the apostle wrote to Timothy, ch. iv. 10, had forsaken him probably through fear of persecution, and was gone to Thessalonica, appears afterwards to have recovered his courage, and to have returned to the apostle, who mentions him with honour in the Epistle to Philemon, as his fellow-labourer.

It is highly probable that Timothy was at Ephesus when he received this letter. The apostle sends his salutations to the family of Onesiphorus, who resided at Ephesus, and to Prisca and Aquila, who appear to have fixed their abode in that city. He desires Timothy to bring with him the articles which

he had left at Troas, which, though not directly in his way from Ephesus, was nevertheless the route which the apostle had taken in passing into Greece, and was probably the common route of those who wished to shorten the passage by sea. He warns Timothy against the errors of Hymeneus, and the malignity of Alexander, both of whom he mentions with disapprobation in his first epistle, which was unquestionably sent to Timothy at Ephesus. It is presumed that this evangelist took leave of the apostle at Miletus in his way to Jerusalem, no further mention being made of him in the history, and that he returned with the elders to Ephesus, where he remained till the apostle sent this letter inviting him to Rome.

The main design of the apostle in this epistle is to fortify the mind of the evangelist against those discouraging apprehensions which the sufferings and persecutions of the first teachers of the gospel might naturally excite: to raise him above the sense of shame and fear in the cause of truth, and to animate him to a resolute and faithful discharge of the duties of his office by his own example, by the example of Christ, and by the prospect of a future retribution.

First. The apostle, after a suitable introduction, expresses his great tenderness for the evangelist, and his earnest desire of an interview with him. Ch. i. 1—5.

SECONDLY. He urges Timothy to firmness and fidelity, and exhorts him not to be ashamed of visiting him in his confinement, which was indeed his honour, not his disgrace; he expresses much disapprobation of the conduct of some who had deserted him in his sufferings, and highly applauds the zeal and affection of Onesiphorus, who had visited and succoured him in his confinement, ver. 6—18.

THIRDLY. The apostle earnestly exhorts his friend to be a faithful and assiduous teacher of the gospel, and to make up his mind to incur all dangers, and to endure all hardships and fatigues, with a view to the glorious recompense promised by the gospel, and encourages him by his own example. —Ch. ii. 1—13.

FOURTHLY. The apostle requires Timothy to charge his hearers not to lose time in discussing unprofitable questions, and especially not to give countenance to antichristian errors, which, if they do not exclude from salvation, at least tarnish the character. He urges him to the practice of virtue, to decline trifling discussions, and to communicate instruction in a familiar and impressive manner, ver. 14—26.

FIFTHLY. The apostle warns the evangelist of the corrupt doctrines and practices of the latter days, which will assuredly terminate in the confusion and ruin of their authors and abettors. Ch. iii. 1—9.

SIXTHLY. He solemnly charges Timothy to ad-

here faithfully to the doctrine in which he had been instructed by himself, which was confirmed by the Jewish scriptures, with which the evangelist was familiar, which had been the constant theme of the apostle's discourses, and for the sake of which, as Timothy well knew, he had often endured cruel persecution, ver. 10—17.

SEVENTHLY. The apostle, under a deep impression that the season of life and active usefulness was near a close, solemnly charges the evangelist to be resolute, diligent, and faithful, in preaching the pure uncorrupted doctrine of the gospel. Ch. iv. 1—8.

EIGHTHLY. He urges Timothy to come to him immediately, states his reason for it, complains of the desertion of some of his companions, represents his danger, and expresses his confidence in God. He gives some directions and commissions for the evangelist to execute in his way, mentions some interesting incidents, repeats his injunction to come to Rome, and concludes with salutations and the apostolical benediction, ver. 9—22.

This epistle has been justly regarded as containing within itself, a satisfactory evidence of the truth and divine authority of the Christian religion. The apostle Paul, one of its most zealous and active teachers, at the close of life, persecuted by his enemies, deserted by his friends, in the midst of a long imprisonment, and in the near prospect of a violent death, writing a confidential letter to an intimate friend, a favourite pupil, whom he had trained up

to the ministry, who had been the faithful associate of his labours and his persecutions, and to whom he looked as the chief instrument under Divine Providence of carrying on the great cause in which he was embarked, in which he had laboured, and for which he suffered; in these critical circumstances, far from expressing any suspicion of the justice of his cause, of the truth of his doctrine, and the propriety of his conduct; far from regretting the sacrifices which he had made, the labours that he had undergone, and the sufferings which he had endured, in the promulgation of the Christian doctrine, and in fulfilling the duties of the apostolic office, he every where adopts the language of joy and exultation, and earnestly exhorts his friend and associate to persevere with alacrity in the same honourable course, even though it would probably lead to a catastrophe similar to his own. This unparalleled fortitude, this holy triumph, this joyful exultation, is utterly inconsistent with the supposition of hypocrisy, of imposture, of artifice and intention to deceive. It is the genuine language of the heart; it is the natural expression of a firm conviction of the truth and importance of the doctrine which he taught, and of a consciousness of the divine authority under which he acted. And as self-deception, in the apostle's case, was absolutely impossible, the Christian doctrine which he was commissioned to teach must have been of divine original.

THE SECOND EPISTLE

TO

T I M O T H Y.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE, after his usual salutation, expresses his affectionate regard to Timothy, and his earnest desire to see him, and reminds the evangelist of the necessity of firmness and wisdom in discharging the duties of his office. Ch. i. 1—7. Ch. I.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

1. THE apostle introduces the epistle with his usual title and salutation, ver. 1, 2.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the appointment of God, in relation to the promise of life [1] Ver. 1.

[1] *Promise of life.*] "He was an apostle for the purpose of announcing this promise to the world." Newcome. See Tit. i. 1—3. The promise of the Mosaic covenant was that of a tem-

Ch. I. Ver. 2. *by Christ Jesus, to Timothy* my *beloved son* [1], *favour, mercy, peace, from God* our *Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord* [2].

This epistle is indited by me, Paul, who am by the authority of God appointed to be an apostle of Jesus Christ; being commissioned and sent forth by Christ my Master, to bear testimony to his resurrection, and to preach his gospel; and especially to proclaim the joyful tidings of a life to come, which is the great and peculiar promise of the Christian dispensation. And it is addressed to Timothy my beloved friend, whom I regard with the affection of a parent, whom I converted to the knowledge and the faith of the gospel, for whose welfare I feel the tenderest concern, and for whom I cannot form a better wish than that he may participate abundantly in the blessings of that glorious doctrine which is the free gift of God, by his holy ser-

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poral life in the land of Canaan; that of the gospel is eternal life in a better state and world. See Benson and Macknight.

[1] My *beloved son.*] This is generally understood of Timothy as being a convert of the apostle. "These two verses," says Dr. Priestley in his Notes on the New Testament, "may be thus paraphrased: 'I, Paul, particularly appointed by God to be an apostle of his son Jesus Christ, the great object of whose gospel is the revelation of a future life, direct this epistle to thee, Timothy, whom I consider as my own son, being converted by me to the faith of Christ. May God grant thee all the blessings of the gospel.'"

[2] *Favour, mercy, peace,* &c.] *i. e.* all the blessings of the gospel which flow from the unmerited, unpurchased mercy of God our Father, and which were dispensed to mankind by Jesus Christ our Lord and Master, whose disciples we are, and who has honoured me with an apostolic mission. This is not a prayer to Christ in person; it is only a wish for those blessings of which he was the medium of communication.

vant and messenger Jesus Christ our honoured Master, and which announces the joyful tidings of peace and pardon, life and immortality. Ch. I. Ver. 2.

2. The apostle expresses his kind remembrance of Timothy, and his earnest desire to see him, ver. 3—5.

I give thanks to God, whom I serve as my *forefathers* did[3], *with a pure conscience, (inasmuch*[4] *as I incessantly make mention of thee in my evening and morning prayers*[5], *being earnestly desirous to see thee, for I recollect thy tears*[6], *that I may* 3. 4.

[3] *As my forefathers did.*] απο προγονων. "*à l'exemple de.*" L'Enfant, and Beausobre. "*Majorum meorum vestigia secutus.*" Beza. "Majorum exemplo: *Eundem Deum colebat Paulus, quem coluerant majores ejus. Non enim alius Deus est Judæorum, alius Deus Novi Testamenti.*" Rosenmuller. See Newcome. Some explain Rom. ix. 3, by giving απο the same signification which it has here; but I think improperly. See the note there. The apostle had probably been charged by the Judaizers with apostatizing from the worship of his ancestors. He here defends himself from that imputation; and Dr. Benson thinks that the expression *a pure conscience* contains an oblique reflection upon the sinister motives of the judaizing zealots.

[4] *Inasmuch*, &c.] I follow Dr. Benson in the position of the parenthesis, so that the construction of the sentence is, "I give thanks to God—when I call to remembrance thy undissembled faith." According to the more usual interpretation ὡς is made to stand for ὅτι, and the apostle thanks God that he makes mention of him in his prayers: *i. e.* that he has just reason so to do. See Newcome.

[5] *Make mention of thee in my evening and morning prayers.*] In the original, *night and day*; in allusion probably to the continual burnt-offering morning and evening. Compare 1 Thess. v. 17, Dan. viii. 11, 12.

[6] *Recollect thy tears.*] See Acts xx. 37, 38. It is supposed that the evangelist Timothy parted from the apostle at Miletus, and that he returned to Ephesus with the elders of that church;

Ch. I. Ver. 5. *be filled with joy,) when I call to remembrance thine undissembled*[1] *faith, which dwelt*[2] *first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice*[3], *and* which dwelleth, *I am persuaded, in thee also.*

I am represented by many who wish to injure my character and to disparage my labours, as an apostate from the religion of my ancestors, because I zealously support the liberty of the gentile churches, and because I every where teach that converts from heathenism are under no obligation to submit to the ceremonial law. But this report is a foul aspersion. For being myself a Jew, I continue to observe the rites of the law, and every morning and evening I offer my humble adoration to the one living and true God in the way that my pious forefathers did; and my conscience bears its testimony to the purity of my affections, and to the sincerity of my devotions. In these my daily supplications I constantly remember my beloved friend, imploring the divine

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and that the apostle here alludes to the tears which he shed upon that occasion.

[1] *Thine undissembled faith.*] "Timothy," says Dr. Benson, "not only believed right, but he also acted right; he would not hypocritically conceal or disguise his sentiments, as the Judaizers appear to have done." 1 Tim. ii. 1, 5—7, 19, 20.

[2] *Dwelt first,* &c.] ενωκησε· "*inhabited:* it was not a mere profession, or a transient feeling, but a fixed principle. See Benson.

[3] *Lois—Eunice.*] These pious women were Jewesses, Acts xvi. 1. They had taken very meritorious pains to instruct Timothy in the Jewish scriptures, 2 Tim. iii. 15; and probably prepared his mind for receiving the instructions afterwards communicated by the apostle. Dr. Benson remarks "the undesigned coincidence of the epistle with the history as an internal mark of the genuineness of the epistle."

blessing upon him, and expressing my earnest desire that he may be directed and preserved on his way to Rome, where it would afford me the highest gratification to have an interview with him, as I have not forgotten the tears which he shed at our last painful separation at Miletus three years ago. And when I call to mind your faith and piety, of the genuineness and energy of which you have given so many satisfactory proofs, I offer my devout thanksgivings to the God of mercy and truth, who first opened the heart of your excellent mother and her venerable parent to the reception of the great truths of the gospel, and whose blessing, co-operating with their wise and pious instructions, prepared your ingenuous spirit for the admission of the same glorious doctrines, which I am convinced (and I rejoice in the conviction) are now the ruling principles of your conduct and the sure foundation of your hope. Ch. I. Ver. 5.

3. The apostle exhorts Timothy to make the best use of his eminent qualifications for the Christian ministry, ver. 6, 7.

For which reason I remind thee to kindle up[4] *that free gift of God*[5] *which is in thee by the im-* 6.

[4] *To kindle up.*] So Mr. Wakefield. In the public version, *stir up.* "The original is αναζωπυρειν, which signifies to 'blow or stir up a fire when it does not burn sufficiently.'" Benson; who adds, that "possibly there might be some danger lest opposition and persecution should damp Timothy's zeal."

[5] *That free gift of God.*] "The endowments of the spirit." Newcome. Dr. Priestley, in his notes, remarks that "Paul had

Ch. I. Ver. 7. *position of my hands*[1]. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fearfulness, but of power, and of love, and of wisdom*[2].

Knowing the sincerity of your profession, and your earnest desire of usefulness, and being likewise apprized of the difficulties and discouragements which occur in the faithful discharge of the Christian ministry, and which might appall a mind less firm and vigorous than yours, my first and most earnest advice is, that you would devote yourself wholly to the duties of your important office. Stir

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imparted to Timothy those gifts of the spirit which were peculiar to that age; but it is probable that it depended in a great measure upon men themselves whether they were more or less distinguished by them, the Divine Being imparting them most freely to those who were most zealous and active in the Christian cause."

[1] *Imposition of my hands.*] See 1 Tim. iv. 14; where the gift is said to be conferred by the imposition of hands of the presbytery. Perhaps the texts may be best reconciled by adopting Bengel's reading in the first epistle. See the note.

[2] *Of fearfulness,* &c.] This was the spirit of the law, which was a yoke of bondage, Rom.viii. 15; Gal. iv. 3, 7; Heb. xii. 18—24. "of fear in the midst of persecution." Newcome. *Of power:* "in miracles and spiritual gifts." Newcome. *Of love:* "universal benevolence: love to God and man, the characteristic of genuine Christianity. *Of wisdom:* of prudence in displaying miraculous powers, in avoiding or softening persecution, in teaching and admonishing." Newcome. "*Non vult Deus ut animo simus timido, sed forti, amoris prudentiæque pleno. Hæc ideo dicit, quod aliquantum metuebat ne Timotheus, conspectis illis perpetuis malis, quæ Paulum et Christianos premebant, ob id labasceret.* πν. δειλιας *animus* timidus. *Animo timido opponitur* πν. δυν. *animus* fortis *periculis et vexationibus resistens. Ex* amore *proximi fortitudo illa nascitur. Conjuncta esse debet cum hac fortitudine in admonendo, et castigando malos charitas et* σωφρ. moderatio, *ut doctor moderate se gerat in munere suo.*" Rosenmuller.

up and fan the holy fire that is kindled in your breast, and cause it to burn continually with a bright, a cheering, and an enlivening flame. Call forth into vigorous and constant exercise those qualifications for diffusing the knowledge and the power of the gospel, with which you are so eminently endowed, and which were in a very extraordinary manner communicated to you; when, after having been chosen as an associate with me in the ministry of the gospel, the elders of the church united in recommending you to the divine blessing, and the gifts of the spirit were imparted by the imposition of my hands. And remember, my beloved friend, that the spirit which the gospel infuses, is not a spirit of indolence or timidity which shrinks from difficulties and from dangers, but it is a spirit of wisdom, of power, and of goodness, which, arming the chosen defenders of the Christian faith with supernatural powers, inspires them at the same time with undaunted courage, tempered with discretion, and which, filling the heart with love to God and benevolence to man, diligently seeks, wisely discerns, and unremittingly pursues, the most efficacious means of diffusing the knowledge, the power, and the blessings of the gospel.

Ch. I. Ver. 7.

SECTION II.

Ch. I. *THE APOSTLE, expressing his entire confidence in the truth, the importance and the ultimate success of the gospel, encourages Timothy to persevere in the faithful discharge of his ministry, whatever the personal consequences might be.* Ch. i. 8—14.

1. The apostle exhorts him not to be ashamed either of the gospel or its suffering ministers, but to be willing to be a fellow-sufferer with them in the same glorious cause, ver. 8—10.

Ver. 8. *Be not then ashamed of the testimony concerning our Lord*[1], *nor of me a prisoner*[2] *for his sake; but take thy share in the afflictions of the gospel*[3], *according to the power of God*[4].

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[1] *The testimony concerning our Lord.*] So Newcome. Mr. Wakefield renders it, "the testimony *unto* our Lord." The original is ambiguous: it either expresses the doctrine which Christ attested, or the office of giving testimony to it; the gospel itself, or the ministry of the gospel. I have included both in the paraphrase, though the former appears to me preferable.

[2] *Of me a prisoner.*] Dr. Benson supposes that "the Judaizers had objected to Timothy the sufferings of Paul, and intimated how scandalous it was to adhere to one who was so odious to mankind, and treated by them as a malefactor."

[3] *Take thy share,* &c.] See Doddridge. Dr. Priestley observes, that "the apostle holds out no prospects of advantage in this life. On the contrary, he was ready to lay down his own life in the Christian cause. Has this the air of imposture?"

[4] *According to the power of God.*] "according to the support

Having thus imbibed the spirit of the gospel, and being eminently qualified to preach the joyful tidings, be not ashamed of that glorious doctrine which our master taught, for which he suffered, and the divine authority of which he amply attested, nor of the office of the Christian ministry. And think it no disgrace to acknowledge yourself an associate with me in this honourable work, though I am now impoverished, calumniated, and suffering imprisonment for the sake of Christ, and for the zeal with which I have defended the liberty of the Gentile church. Zealots may indeed represent me as a wretch deserted by God and man. Listen not to their malicious calumnies; but rather be willing to take your full share of disgrace and suffering in the cause of Christian truth and liberty; relying with confidence upon divine support. And shrink not from persecution in the promulgation of that gospel which God has supported and will continue to support by his great power in defiance of all opposition. Ch. I. Ver. 8.

Who hath saved us, and invited us[5] *with a holy* 9.

that God affords." Newcome. "that gospel whose truth has been confirmed and sealed by the power of God." Harwood. The elliptical style of the apostle makes his meaning ambiguous. Both senses are good. The later seems to me most agreeable to the apostle's usual style. Mr. Wakefield says he is quite at a loss which to prefer.

[5] *Who hath saved us, and invited us.*] "who hath called us to salvation." Wakefield. "who hath placed us Gentiles, as well as Jews, in a state of salvation." Newcome. See Benson. The salvation of which the apostle speaks is, deliverance from bondage, both from the yoke of the law, and from the bondage of idolatry and vice.

Ch. I. Ver. 9. *invitation* [1], *not in consideration of our works, but because of his own purpose, and of that favour which was given us* [2] *in Christ Jesus before the ancient dispensations* [3].

The God who has attested the gospel of his son by the gifts of his spirit, and who supports his faithful messengers under their severest trials, has graciously invited all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, to participate in the invaluable blessings of the gospel: and he requires of those who are disposed to accept of his invitation, to separate themselves from the unbelieving world by a public profession of faith in the gospel. This gracious invitation is sent to us, not because we have merited any favour from him by the perfection of our obedience either to the moral or the ceremonial law, but because he had resolved, purely from the impulse of his own unlimited benevolence, before the Mosaic law was

[1] *A holy invitation:*] *i. e.* an invitation to separate themselves from the unbelieving world, as worshipers of the true God.

[2] *Was given us:*] *i. e.* "which he determined to give us. See John v. 22, xvii. 24; 1 John v. 11; Eph. i. 4, 5; Tit. i. 2." Benson. "We see here," says Dr. Priestley, "how familiar this language is with the sacred writers, things being said to be actually done by God, when they could only be intended to be done. How natural, then, is it to interpret what our Saviour says concerning the glory which he had with God before the world was, of the glory which was designed for him before the beginning of the world, which does not imply his pre-existence.

[3] *Ancient dispensations.*] So Newcome. Gr. *secular times.* The Primate refers to Rom. viii. 28, 29; and explains the words of that "undeserved favour which God determined to bestow on us, *i. e.* all mankind, through Christ Jesus, before the secular ages, *i. e.* all former dispensations."

instituted, and even before time began, to communicate these blessings to mankind by the mission of Jesus Christ. This gracious purpose was long concealed in his own breast, and the saints and prophets of former ages were wholly ignorant of it. Ch. I. Ver. 9.

But which hath now been made manifest by the appearance[5] *of our Saviour*[5] *Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death*[6], *and spread abroad the light*[7] *of an incorruptible life*[8] *by the gospel.* 10.

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[4] *Appearance.*] επιφανειας· the word properly signifies a "public splendid appearance of a luminous object;" it is applied by ancient writers to the appearance of the gods. It here expresses the public ministry of Christ, which was made illustrious by his miracles; and is used in other places by the apostle to express the "glory of Christ's second coming." 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8; Tit. ii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 8. See Schleusner.

[5] *Saviour.*] See ver. 9. Jesus Christ was the deliverer from bondage.

[6] *Abolished death.*] Καταργεω, *proprie et generatim, otiosum, inutilem, vel inefficacem reddo, quocunque modo hoc fiat, ex κατα et αργεω cesso.* Luc. xiii. 7; Rom. iii. 3; Gal. iii. 17." Schleusner. "who hath indeed made death ineffectual." Macknight; who in his note remarks, that "Christ hath not abolished temporal death to any one, but he has deprived death of its power to continue mankind in the state of death. See Heb. ii. 14, 1 Cor. xv. 26."

[7] *Spread abroad the light.*] φωτισαντος. So Mr. Wakefield. "not brought to light, as if reason could not discover a future state: the word signifies *to throw light upon, to illustrate.* 'Μαλλον εν Σολων Ομηρον εφωτισεν η Πεισιστρατος· *Solon illustrated Homer better than Pisistratus.*' Diog. Laert. p. 36." Harwood. See Schleusner. "εις φως αγειν, *Suidas. Illuminando patefacere, docere.*" H. Stephens. See Newcome, and Wetstein on 1 Cor. iv. 5. Dr. Whitby produces many pertinent passages to show the very obscure notions which the heathen philosophers and moralists entertained of a future life; but of a resurrection of the dead they had no conception at all. The Jews entertained some imperfect expectations of it. But the doctrine of Christ has placed it in the clearest light. Dr.

Ch. I. Ver. 10. This merciful design is now made manifest to the whole world by the public mission of Jesus Christ, the appointed deliverer from the burdensome yoke of ceremonial institutions, and from the more grievous bondage of sin and death. This glorious Saviour has, as I may say, already put an end to the dominion, and drawn the sting, of death, by the assurance which he hath given that all the posterity of Adam shall be raised to life, and not a single trophy shall remain of all the triumphs of this mighty and universal conqueror. The gospel of Christ diffuses a cheering radiance over the darkness of the grave, and asserts in the clearest and most unambiguous language that delightful truth, which was before only the object of dim conjecture and anxious surmise, the resurrection of mankind to a new and glorious state of existence, which shall never more be subject to dissolution or decay.

2. The apostle glories in his office as a preacher of the gospel, and in his sufferings for it, and expresses his firm confidence that the Christian doctrine will prevail to the end of time, ver. 11, 12.

Priestley well observes, that "notwithstanding all the corruptions of Christianity, this one great doctrine was never, in fact, denied by any one who ever bore the Christian name. Agreeing in this one great truth, we agree in every thing that is of primary use, and that has a practical influence in life."

[8] *An incorruptible life.*] Gr. *life and incorruption.* Dr. Benson justly remarks, that "these expressions plainly show that the apostle is not speaking of the immortality of the soul, but of the resurrection of the dead and the consequent state of incorruption and immortality. See 1 Cor. xv. 53."

Of which I have been appointed a herald, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. Ch. 1. Ver. 11.

In relation to this most interesting doctrine, I have been appointed by a special commission from our great instructor Jesus Christ to the honourable office of proclaiming it to the world. I have even been invested with the dignities and privileges of the apostolic character; and what is still more astonishing, and continually excites my grateful admiration, I who was once a bigoted Pharisee and a blaspheming persecutor, have been specially authorized to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and to assert their freedom from the ceremonial law.

For which cause also I am suffering these bonds[1]: *nevertheless I am not ashamed*[2], *for I know whom I have believed*[3], *and I am persuaded that he is able to keep what he hath committed to me*[4] *until that day.* 12.

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[1] *These* bonds.] So Wakefield. Or, *these* things; alluding to his poverty, desertion, and danger, as well as to his imprisonment.

[2] *I am not ashamed.*] He thought it no disgrace to suffer in the cause of truth. "I have no misgivings." Wakefield. Rom. ix. 33.

[3] *I know,* &c.] "By appearing to Paul on the way to Damascus, and by bestowing on him spiritual gifts, Jesus convinced him that he was risen from the dead, and was indeed the Christ, and no impostor." Macknight.

[4] *He is able to keep,* &c.] τὴν παραθήκην μου, *my deposit.* The expression is ambiguous: it signifies either "what I have committed to him," viz. my future hopes and happiness. Newcome. See also Whitby: or, "what he hath committed to me," viz. the gospel-doctrine. The latter is most probable. The word occurs only in two other places, 2 Tim. i. 14, and 1 Tim. vi. 20; in both which it undoubtedly signifies the *gospel,* and therefore probably here. Also, this sense best suits the con-

Ch. I. Ver. 12.

And indeed, as you well know, the imprisonment which I now suffer, and the imminent dangers to which I am exposed, are entirely owing to the fidelity, zeal, and courage, which I manifested in executing my commission. Nevertheless, I do not repent of what I have done, nor am I ashamed of the doctrine which I have taught: nor do I experience any secret misgivings with regard to the issue of this divine cause, or of the ultimate state of those who are embarked in its defence. Be assured, Timothy, I have not taken up this profession upon slight grounds. I know the character of that

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nexion. The apostle, though a great sufferer, is not ashamed. Why? Because he is confident that the gospel which he teaches, and for which he suffers, will be preserved by its divine Author to the end of time, whatever becomes of the ministers and teachers of it. "παραθηκη, propriè, *depositum*. Metaphoricè, *omne quod alicujus curæ est demandatum*, 2 Tim. i. 12. *Deum posse potenter tueri et conservare hanc doctrinam, fidei meæ commissam.*" Schleusner. "*Eam posse doctrinam mihi traditam conservare ad finem usque mundi.*" Rosenmuller. "I am persuaded he is able to preserve in the world till his future coming that sacred deposit with which he has intrusted me." Harwood. Macknight adopts the same interpretation. But Doddridge, Whitby, Wakefield, Worsley, Newcome, and Priestley, adhere to the public version. Benson illustrates both interpretations, but in his paraphrase adopts the latter. Wakefield, in his manuscript notes in the margin of Wetstein, now in possession of my learned friend Arnold Wainewright, Esq., gives the preference to the sense of "a deposit committed to the apostle;" which differs from that given in his translation, "what I have committed to him," which, however, is favoured by 1 Pet. iv. 19, to which he refers.

Until that day: "*nempe diem judicii, dicit enim apostolus Deus conservare potest et conservabit religionem, etsi ego sim in vinculis. Si ego non possum docere, alii docebunt, nec unquam deerunt doctores, usque ad illum diem Jesu Christi.*" Rosenmuller.

Being who is the great object of my faith and hope. Ch. I. Ver. 12
I know how well he is able, and how immutably he is resolved, to support his own cause, and to carry on his own benevolent designs. I am well assured, and I triumph in the thought, that when my season of service is over, the inestimable treasure which is now committed to my trust shall not be lost, but shall be transferred to other good and faithful hands in regular succession, and safely kept to the great day of consummation, when the glorious plan shall be complete in all its parts, and the gracious purposes of infinite wisdom and mercy shall be fully accomplished.

3. The apostle earnestly presses Timothy to adhere stedfastly to the doctrine which he had taught him, ver. 13, 14.

Hold fast that model of salutary words[1] *which thou hast heard from me, with faith and love in* 13.

[1] *Model of salutary words.*] "ὑποτυπωσις, propriè, *delineatio, brevis ac rudis designatio et adumbratio operis. Exemplar, in animo infixum*; *quod* ideam, *Platonici vocant.* 2 Tim. i. 13, *formam doctrinæ veræ ac salutaris, a me tibi traditæ, in animo tuo expressam habe.*" Schleusner. "Inviolably adhere to that model of salutary instructions." Harwood. Dr. Benson understands the sound words which the apostle here recommends to signify the words of the apostle himself as distinguished from the words of any uninspired and fallible men; and supposes that judaizing Christians and false apostles are obliquely reproved for coining hard words and mysterious phrases. See ch. ii. 2, 14, iii. 7, 13, 14, and iv. 3. "Sound words," says he, "signify the pure gospel doctrine delivered in the plain simple manner of the apostles." It may, however, be doubted whether the apostle meant any thing more than the salutary doctrine of the gospel.

Ch. I. Ver. 14. *Christ Jesus. Keep, through the holy spirit which resideth in us, that excellent deposit* [1].

I instructed you in the true doctrine of Christ in plain and simple language. Retain firm hold of this invaluable doctrine, and in your discourses to others adopt the same plainness and simplicity of speech. Do not, to avoid offence, or to attract admiration, veil the salutary truths of our holy religion in obscure or pompous or mystical phraseology. And let Christian faith be combined with Christian love. Be kind to all, and exercise candour to those who differ from you, even to your bitterest opponents. But never sacrifice the cause of truth under pretence of moderation. Guard with the most jealous vigilance the grand and sacred deposit which has been placed in your hands as well as in mine: employ the gifts and powers with which you as well as myself are endowed, in supporting the Christian faith: and fail not to transmit the doctrine of Christ to those who are to come after you in the same state of purity, simplicity and perfection, in which you have received it from me.

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[1] *Deposit.*] παραθηκην· this is the reading of the best manuscripts. See Griesbach. The common reading is παρακαταθηκην, the sense the same: viz. "the pure gospel." See ver. 12, where the same word is used.

SECTION III.

THE APOSTLE, lamenting the desertion of his Asiatic associates, and applauding the courage and kindness of Onesiphorus, urges Timothy to make a judicious selection of persons who should succeed to the office of Christian instructors, and to continue firm and faithful in his adherence to Christian principles, and to the duties of his office. Ch. i. 15.—ii. 7. Ch. I.

1. The apostle expresses his regret at the apostasy of some of the Asiatic Christians; and mentions, in terms of high approbation and gratitude, the fidelity, zeal, and friendship, of Onesiphorus, ver. 15—18.

Thou knowest this[2], *that all those who are in* Ver. 15.

[2] *Thou knowest this,* &c.] The Greek writers in general understand the apostle as speaking, not of the Asiatic churches in general, but of the Asiatic Christians who were with him at Rome. "Οι εν τη Ασια· τουτ' εστιν οι εκ της Ασιας." Œcumenius *in loc.* Such is also the judgement of Estius, Mosheim, Beausobre, Lardner, Doddridge, and Priestley. See Lardner's *Hist. of Apostles,* ch. xii. sect. 10. Some intelligence of the apostle's situation at Rome, and of the cowardly conduct of these Asiatics, might have reached Timothy before the arrival of this epistle. He might, being at Ephesus, have heard of their return home. Benson, Newcome, and others, understand the expression of a general apostasy of the Christians in Asia to the tenets of the Judaizers, of which the apostle had been informed, and which he mentions in order to excite the zeal of the evangelist. But an apostasy so general is not probable.

Ch. I. Ver. 15. *Asia have deserted me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*

Some disciples from Asia accompanied me to Rome, or found me there. They at first professed great regard for me; but, when they saw the danger to which I was exposed, and the great animosity of the Jews, they were intimidated, and went over to the party of my opponents, who are zealous for the observation of the law, esteeming it no doubt most safe and reputable, and, with others of my associates, they have left me, and have returned to their homes. Of this you have probably been already informed. In the number of these apostates it grieves me to insert the names of Phygellus and Hermogenes, two eminent persons, of whose faith and fortitude I once entertained better hopes, and whose unexpected and unkind desertion of me in my present circumstances gives me the deepest concern.

16. *May the Lord show mercy to the family of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me*[1], *and was*
17. *not ashamed of this my chain*[2]. *But when he was at Rome, he sought for me very diligently, and*
18. *found* me[3]. *The Lord grant him that he may find*

[1] *Refreshed me.*] ανεψυξε. "*cooled* and refreshed me, by visiting me in my confinement and supplying my wants when I had like to have been scorched to death, by the heat and violence of persecution." Benson.

[2] *Of this my chain.*] την ἁλυσιν μου. "this chain of mine." Wakefield.

[3] *He sought for me very diligently.*] This is no proof, as Dr. Lardner justly observes, that the apostle was in very close confinement. For how should a stranger, as Onesiphorus was, find out any man in a great city without inquiry? And when

mercy from the Lord[4] *in that day. And his many services in Ephesus*[5] *thou knowest very well.* Ch. 1. Ver. 18.

May the blessing of God rest upon the head of Onesiphorus and of all his family. His conduct towards me has formed an honourable contrast to that of his countrymen, to whom I have just alluded. His conversation, his tender sympathy, his generous liberality, have often relieved, encouraged, and consoled me in the season of distress and danger. His kindness to me has been like a refreshing breeze amidst the heats of summer. Though I was a despised and deserted prisoner, bound in chains, yes, in that very chain which galls my limbs while I am writing this epistle, and though Onesiphorus was a man of note and opulence, he thought it no disgrace to avow his affection for me and for the cause in which I suffer. But when he came to Rome, with much trouble and some hazard, he inquired after me with unwearied diligence till he found me; and he then administered to me the relief which his generous spirit prompted him to impart. I cannot express the sense I feel of my obligation to this kind, generous, and disinterested

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he had found out his residence, he does not appear to have met with any difficulty in repeating his visits to the apostle. This was also the opinion of Witsius. See Lardner *ubi sup.*

[4] *The Lord grant,* &c.] "an usual Hebraism, in which the noun is repeated for the pronoun. See Gen. i. 26, 27, xix. 24; 1 Kings viii. 11; 2 Chron. vii. 2; 1 Cor. i. 7, 8; 1 Thess. i. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 5." Whitby, Benson, Newcome.

[5] *His many services in Ephesus,* &c.] ὁσα διηκονησε. See Wakefield. The Syriac and Vulgate versions read μοι, which appear to have been followed by our translators.

Ch. I. Ver. 18. friend, much less can I make him any adequate return. May God reward him abundantly for all his kindness in that great day to which our glorious Master has directed our views and hopes, when even a cup of cold water given to a suffering disciple shall not be forgotten, and when virtue shall obtain its promised recompense. Nor is it in Rome only that I have received benefits from him. So long ago as when I resided at Ephesus you remember how respectfully, how hospitably, he entertained us; with what tender affection, and upon how many important and trying occasions, he generously offered his services to us; and how much we stand indebted to his friendship and his zeal. Such worth and disinterestedness of character cannot be too highly prized, and ought never to be forgotten.

2. The apostle further advises Timothy to be firm to his principles, and to be discreet in the choice of those who were to be the instructors of others, ch. ii. 1—2.

Ch. II. Ver. 1. *Thou, therefore, my son*[1], *strengthen thyself in the grace*[2] *which is by Christ Jesus.*

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[1] *Thou, therefore, my son.*] "There is something," says Dr. Priestley, "exceedingly affecting and edifying in the manner in which this old servant of Christ writes to one much younger than himself in the same service."

[2] *The grace.*] εν χαριτι. See ch. i. 6, 7, 8. "'The grace that is in Christ Jesus,' means 'the blessings which God bestows upon men by him.'" Priestley. "The gracious gospel." Wakefield. "Exert yourself with vigour in propagating the Christian dispensation." Harwood. "*Fortis esto in admini-*

As so many, from timidity or other motives, are deserting the cause of truth, it is peculiarly incumbent upon us who remain faithful to redouble our activity and zeal. Permit me, then, my dear Timothy, whom I love with the affection of a parent, and to whose conversion I have been so happily instrumental, to press this duty home upon you. In the very important station which you so honourably and usefully occupy at Ephesus, it is of the utmost consequence that your faith should be firmly established in the doctrine of the gospel, and that your heart should be comforted and encouraged by those glorious discoveries which God of his infinite mercy has vouchsafed to reveal to mankind by his holy servant and messenger Jesus Christ. Ch. II. Ver. 1.

And what thou hast heard from me before many witnesses[3], *the same do thou intrust*[4] *to faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also.* 2.

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strando munere a Christo tibi concredito. Χαρις, *ut* Rom. xii. 3, *videtur h. l. esse munus apostolicum.*" Rosenmuller.

[3] *Before many witnesses.*] "δια πολλων μαρτυρων. So δια may be understood 2 Cor. viii. 18, and perhaps Gal. iii. 19." Benson; who supposes that the apostle glances at the private and clandestine manner in which the Judaizers taught their doctrines. They crept into houses, and were afraid of being discovered. Newcome explains the phrase, "in the course of my public preaching." Harwood renders it, "those truths which I have imparted to you, and which have been attested by such a variety of witnesses." So Macknight. "δια, coram. *Hanc* της δια *significationem multis probat Krebsius ad* Act. vii. 53." Rosenmuller.

[4] *Intrust.*] παραθε, alluding to παραθηκην, *a deposit*, ch. i. 12, 13. Dr. Benson observes, that "it is plain the apostle expected that Christianity would continue in the world after their decease, and that they appointed a succession of men to teach it."

Ch. II. Ver. 2. I have taught you the plain simple doctrine of Christ, not, as my calumnious opponents teach theirs, in a mean and clandestine manner, as if I were afraid or ashamed of letting my principles be known. No: what I have taught I have taught publicly, conscious of the authority with which I was invested, of the truth and importance of my doctrine, and of the purity and simplicity of my motives. This heavenly deposit committed to my trust, and by me consigned to your charge, do you, O Timothy, with the same fidelity deliver over to others, who, by their firmness and integrity, will preserve it pure and uncorrupted; and who, by the clearness of their conceptions and their ready utterance, shall be qualified to act the part of wise, faithful, and successful instructors to the succeeding generation, when apostles and evangelists are silent in the dust.

3. The apostle earnestly exhorts his friend to the exercise of persevering fortitude, diligence, and self-denial, as the only ground upon which he can hope for acceptance and success, ver. 3—7.

3. *Bear thy part, therefore, in suffering*[1], *as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

You have enlisted yourself under the banner of Jesus Christ, and you well knew that you then en-

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[1] *Bear thy part in suffering.*] συγκακοπαθησον is the reading of the Alexandrine, Ephrem, Clermont, and other ancient copies, and of the Syriac and Coptic versions. It is approved by Griesbach.

gaged yourself in a service of toil and danger. Do not then shrink from the difficulties with which you may be called to encounter. Be content to suffer as others do in the same honourable cause, and maintain your allegiance to the end of life. Ch. II. Ver. 3.

No one[2] *who entereth into military service embarrasseth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath enlisted* him. 4.

If you were to enter into the Roman army, you could not expect to obtain the approbation of your commander, and the reward due to faithful and approved service, by remaining at home and occupying yourself in the concerns of civil life, instead of devoting yourself to the duties of a military state: nor can you approve yourself the faithful soldier of Christ unless you make a serious business of your profession, and devote yourself entirely to the duties of it. If secular interest, or ease, or security, or any personal gratification, be the primary object of pursuit, you are disqualified from serving Christ in the important post which he has assigned you.

Also, if any man contend in the games, *he win-* 5.

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[2] *No one,* &c.] Or perhaps, 'every one who entereth upon the military profession avoideth embarrassing himself with the concerns of this life, lest he should displease his commanding officer.' See Wakefield, and Rosenmuller. Dr. Benson observes, from Grotius, that "the Roman soldiers were not suffered to be tutors to any persons, curators of another man's estate, proctors for other men's causes, or to undertake husbandry or merchandise." "As soldiers, we ought to be both active and fearless." Dr. Priestley.

Ch. II. Ver. 5. *neth not the crown, unless he contend according to the rules*[1].

The most honourable distinction among the Greeks is, to win the chaplet at their celebrated games. But you well know that no one, let his rank, his fortune, or his interest be what it may, can ever attain this grand object of public ambition, without having first submitted to all that self-denial, and to all those laborious and hazardous exercises, which are required by the rules of the games as previous qualifications, nor without the most eager and unremitted exertion while the contest continues. If the conditions are not observed, the prize is lost. Nor will that unfading crown, that far more glorious and enduring prize which awaits the conqueror in the Christian race, be ever conferred upon him who loiters in his career, or who, from indolence or timidity, or any other unworthy consideration, neglects to comply with the terms required by the great Master of the course.

6. *The husbandman must labour before he be partaker of the fruits*[2].

The man who will not plough, nor sow, shall never reap. The plenteous harvest is the precious

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[1] *According to the rules:*] *i. e.* "the rules prescribed to such as mean to contend in the Grecian games. He will not obtain the crown unless he use the proper exercise, diet, &c." Newcome. The crown was of parsley, laurel, or bay. See Raphelius.

[2] *The husbandman,* &c.] So Wakefield. "*Ordo naturalis verborum videtur talis esse.* τον γεωργον πρωτον κοπιωντα, *i. e.* κεκοπιακοτα δει κ. τ. λ. *agricolam de fructibus percipere æquum est, at ita demum, si prius laboraverit.*" Rosenmuller.

reward of much previous and persevering toil and industry, nor can the harvest of immortal bliss be obtained upon any other terms. The reward, both in quantity and in value, shall be proportioned to the previous labour; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Ch. II. Ver. 6.

Consider what I say, and the Lord will give thee[3] *understanding in all things.* 7.

Reflect, my dear friend, upon the hints which I have suggested; apply them to your own case; act continually upon such principles and with such views. If you are sincerely solicitous to obey the call of duty and to live up to the spirit of your profession, you shall not want for direction and support. The God whom you serve, and whose blessing you devoutly implore, will be your counsellor and your strength. To his favour, guidance, and protection, I affectionately commend you.

SECTION IV.

For the encouragement of the evangelist, the apostle sets before him the example of Jesus, and his own; and from various considerations he enforces firmness, faithfulness, and prudence. Ch. ii. 8—15.

1. The apostle reminds Timothy of the mission,

[3] *The Lord will give thee.*] The most approved copies read δωσει for δψη, which better connects with the illative particle γαρ. *for* the Lord will give, &c. See Benson and Griesbach.

Ch. II. the descent, the character, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, ver. 8.

Ver. 8. *Remember Jesus Christ*[1], *of the race of David,* who was *raised from the dead, according to the gospel*[2] which I preach.

To animate you to duty, often think on the character, the conduct, and reward of our great Master. Be not misled by the speculations of a vain philosophy. Whatever may be pretended by men who are ashamed to avow the truth, the man Jesus, who descended from the royal house of David, is the true Christ. He is not a man in appearance only, nor a human body inhabited and possessed by a spirit of a superior order. The gospel which I teach declares him to be a real man, born and descended like other men, and in no way distinguished from his brethren, except by his high commission as a prophet of God. His death was not imaginary, but real; and so likewise was his resurrection.

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[1] *Remember Jesus Christ.*] Dr. Priestley observes, that "the apostle's design here is to guard Timothy and others against the tenets of the Gnostic teachers. They said it was Jesus and not Christ that was descended from David. In allusion to this opinion, the apostle here says, that Jesus Christ, meaning his whole person, was of the seed of David, his proper descendant, a man, like Jews or other men; and that he had a proper resurrection in the flesh, as a pattern of our resurrection, which the Gnostics explained away. This was the pure gospel which Paul preached, and for which he was then suffering."

[2] *The gospel* which I preach.] So Newcome. Gr. *my gospel.* Some of the ancients suppose that Luke's gospel is here referred to. Euseb. *Ecc. Hist.* l. iii. c. 4. But the apostle uses the same phrase Rom. ii. 16, xvi. 25, before that gospel was written. See Benson. Indeed it is not probable that these histories had obtained the title of Gospels at so early a period.

Regard these important events as undoubted facts, the reality of which is not for a moment to be called in question, and a firm belief in which is to be the governing principle of your conduct as a Christian and an evangelist. Ch. II. Ver. 8.

2. He reminds the evangelist that this was the doctrine for the propagation of which he was himself at that very time a prisoner and sufferer, ver. 9, 10.

For which[3] *I am suffering affliction, even unto bonds, as an evil-doer; but the word of God is not bound*[4]. 9.

These are the interesting truths in the publication of which I am incessantly employed, and on account of which I am even now suffering many hardships and afflictions; so that, although it has been the constant employment of my life ever since my conversion to the Christian faith, to promote the moral improvement of my fellow-creatures, I am here in confinement like a common malefactor, as if I had been guilty of crimes which merited exclusion from human society. Well,—under all my sufferings I have one consolation still: a consolation which never fails. Prisoner as I am, the glo-

[3] *For which.*] εν ῳ. See Matt. vi. 7, Heb. xi. 2, Whitby, Wakefield, Newcome.

[4] *The word of God,* &c.] A lively turn of expression, which strongly illustrates the generous bent of the apostle's mind. He cares little about himself, if the gospel has its free and glorious course. See Macknight. "*ea semper propagabitur, etsi ego sum in vinculis.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. II. Ver. 9. rious gospel is free and unconfined. I cannot indeed go, as I once did, from place to place, to proclaim the joyful tidings. But that sacred cause, the cause of truth and righteousness, that cause of which God is the patron and protector, cannot fail to make its way, and, in the end, to triumph over all opposition.

10. *Therefore* [1], *I endure all things for the sake of the chosen* [2] people, *that they also may obtain the salvation* [3] *which is through Christ Jesus with everlasting glory.*

I suffer grievous wrongs; I am deprived of many comforts; I am bereaved of that greatest of blessings, personal liberty; and I feel these injuries to their utmost extent. Yet, knowing the important purposes which are answered by the sufferings of the advocates for truth, I do not repine. It was my zeal for the liberties of the Gentile church, whom God hath chosen to visit with his mercy, which incurred the resentment of my countrymen, and

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[1] *Therefore.*] δια τουτο. *q. d.* Why do I endure and voluntarily submit to these sufferings? Ans. For this reason: that the elect may be saved and brought to everlasting glory.—A writer in Bowyer (Battier) connects δια τουτο with the preceding verse: *q. d.* "but the word of God is not THEREFORE bound."

[2] *Chosen* people:] *i. e.* Gentiles. See Newcome. Benson also supposes the Gentiles to be here particularly alluded to. But as the apostle in the context alludes also to the Gnostics, he may possibly, by the elect, mean Christians in general.

[3] *The salvation,* &c.] The apostle distinguishes between *salvation through Christ,* and *everlasting glory*: the *former* is present deliverance from ignorance, idolatry, and vice; the *latter* is the final recompense of virtue in a future life. See Eph. ii. 5, 8.

which was the occasion of this tedious imprisonment. And there is no suffering to which I would not willingly submit, if it might be the means of converting idolatrous heathen to the faith of Christ, and of inducing them to accept the privileges of the gospel so freely tendered to them, and by a wise improvement of the means of virtue, to obtain an interest in that everlasting felicity which is the great promise of the gospel to every practical believer. Ch. II. Ver. 10.

3. The apostle excites his friend to vigorous and persevering exertion, by reminding him that to such exertions only are the promises annexed, ver. 11—13.

This is *an undoubted truth*[4]: *If we have died with* him, *we shall also live with* him; *if we suffer, we shall also reign with* him; *if we renounce* him, *he also will renounce us; if we are faithless*[5], 11. 12. 13.

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[4] This, &c.] What? Dr. Newcome replies, "The assertion implied in ver. 10, that God admits the Gentiles into the gospel covenant." It is generally understood as referring to the maxims which follow: and γαρ, with which they are introduced, is understood as an expletive, or rather an inchoative particle after ει. See Benson, and Wakefield. Perhaps it is to be understood elliptically: *q. d.* Be ready to bear all things; for if we have died, *i. e.* have been ready to offer up our lives with him and for him, &c. Dr. Priestley observes, "This seems to have been a saying current among Christians, derived, mediately or immediately, from our Saviour himself. All Christians have one interest with Christ their head. They contend, they suffer, and they triumph together."

[5] *If we are faithless.*] "A man may be unfaithful," says Dr. Benson, "by denying the Christian religion, or rejecting it; by corrupting it, or mingling another doctrine with it; or by living unworthy of it. If we are unfaithful, yet Christ is

Ch. II. Ver. 13. *he will continue faithful: he cannot renounce himself*[1].

The profession, and especially the preaching of the pure uncorrupted doctrine of Christ, exposes us to many temporary inconveniences and sufferings; but it does not leave us without an adequate recompense. It is indeed, my friend, a most certain, a most solemn, and a most glorious truth, that whatever sacrifices we may be called to make in the cause of truth and virtue, nay, if we even suffer death itself for the sake of Christ and his gospel, we shall be acting a safe, a wise, and an honourable part. He died for us, and rose again; if we die with him and for him, we, like him, shall rise to a glorious and immortal life. If we suffer persecution for his sake, we shall hereafter share with him in his throne, and participate in his everlasting triumph. To these animating considerations there is also an alarming counterpart, which may justly awaken our utmost solicitude. If we who make a profession of Christianity, and who are placed in eminent stations in the church, who know the truth and the infinite importance of the doctrine we are commissioned to teach, if we, I say, from indolence or timidity, or from any other unworthy motive,

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faithful, and must disown us." He adds, "that the unfaithfulness here spoken of seems to be, denying the Christian religion in time of persecution."

[1] *Renounce himself.*] "He will not deny what he has engaged to perform." Dr. Priestley. "*Negare potest nos, sed non potest negare seipsum; negare non potest se esse Christum, et vera esse quæ ipse docuit.*" Rosenmuller.

should be induced to desert our post, and abandon our profession, our case is wretched beyond expression. He has himself declared that he will another day disown those who now disown and forsake him; and in vain may we flatter ourselves that we shall escape his just animadversion. We may violate our engagements, but he will never swerve from his declarations, either of reward or punishment. He will never contradict himself. And his veracity, his wisdom, and even his benevolence, are pledged to the performance of his threatenings, equally with the accomplishment of his promises. Ch. II. Ver. 13.

4. The apostle exhorts Timothy to insist upon the great truths of the Christian religion, to warn his hearers against unedifying speculations, and to approve himself a wise and faithful minister of the gospel, ver. 14, 15.

Remind them *of these things, earnestly charging* them [2] *before the Lord, not to dispute about words,* which is *of no use* [3], but *to the subversion of the hearers.* 14.

Perseverance in the doctrine and spirit of the

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[2] *Earnestly charging* them.] διαμαρτυρομενος. See Wakefield.

[3] Which is *of no use.*] "These words," says Dr. Priestley, "refer to the idle fables and genealogies of the Gnostics about the emanations of inferior intelligent beings from the Supreme, and their descent to earth, which subverted the hearers by giving them false ideas of the nature and object of the gospel." "*Dum enim tales verborum pugnas audiunt, nihil certi esse in religione Christiana putant ac dicunt; et sic fides eorum subvertitur.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. II. Ver. 14. gospel is a duty of the highest importance. Remind your hearers, therefore, of the great danger of apostasy, or of tempting others to apostatize from the Christian faith. And solemnly warn them, as they will answer for it at the tribunal of their Lord and Judge, that they do not waste their time in fruitless speculations. Disputes concerning superior intelligences and emanations from the Supreme Being, though they assume the name of science, and wear the appearance of something very grand and sublime, are at best nothing more than controversies about unmeaning words; for the subject itself is beyond our comprehension. And when these fanciful opinions are so blended with the truths of the Christian religion as to supersede the most material and important facts upon which the Christian doctrine rests, they become, not only unprofitable, but highly injurious, and entirely mislead and pervert those unhappy persons who give attention to them, by filling their minds with the most erroneous notions concerning the nature and design of the gospel.

15. *Diligently endeavour to present thyself before God*[1], *approved* by him, *a labourer that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing*[2] *the word of truth.*

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[1] *To present thyself before God.*] See Rom. xii. 1. "in this life." Newcome.

[2] *Rightly dividing.*] "This phrase probably alludes to the business of a steward in a great family who gives to each his portion. Thus Timothy was to suit his admonitions to persons of all characters." Dr. Priestley.

"*Ope-*

The day will come when you must give an account unto God, of the manner in which you have fulfilled your important trust. Be earnestly solicitous upon that awful occasion to stand accepted and approved by him. In the mean time, consider yourself as consecrated to God, perform every duty as a tribute which you owe to him, as a sacrifice which you offer for his gracious acceptance. Be assiduous: expose not yourself to the reproach of having, through indolence or timidity, neglected the task assigned you. Like a faithful and a wise steward, distribute to every one his proper portion; and dispense the truths of the gospel with sagacity and discernment, adapting your discourses to the circumstances and situation of your hearers, so that every one in his turn may be instructed and edified. Ch. II. Ver. 15.

SECTION V.

THE APOSTLE cautions Timothy against the errors of the Gnostics, which were then beginning to prevail in the church; and directs him to the use of the best means to reclaim men from error, and to confirm them in truth and virtue. Ch. ii. 16—26.

1. The apostle cautions Timothy against dan-

"*Operam da ut teipsum præbeas operarium Deo probatum valde gnavum et strenuum, qui recte tractat doctrinam veram.* Ορθοτομειν *sæpe est* via recta incedere." Rosenmuller.

Ch. II. gerous errors, especially those which related to the doctrine of the resurrection, ver. 16—18.

Ver. 16. *But avoid profane*[1] *empty declamation, for they*
17. who use it[2] *will proceed to further impiety; and their doctrine will corrode like a gangrene.*

I have been advising you, my dear friend, to adapt your discourses to the understandings and the characters of your hearers. Now, in order to this, you must abstain from that vain declamation which, however it may please the ear, or whatever pompous title it may assume, conveys no useful instruction to the mind, and is at the remotest distance from evangelical truth. Public teachers, whose discourses are of this complexion, may be expected to recede further and further from the faith and practice of the gospel, till, in the end, they become openly wicked, and apostatize altogether from the Christian faith. Such fantastic doctrines as are now professed and taught by men who call themselves Christians, are by no means matters of indifference. They gradually corrupt the minds of those who are infected by them, till, in the end, the whole moral constitution comes to be incurably

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[1] *Profane.*] "βεβηλους. *Proprie dicitur profanus, omnis qui a sacris arcetur et mysteriis; qui quasi limine, τῳ βηλῳ, et ostio templi arcendus est. In N. T. de rebus dicitur, et* omne quod est alienum a religione Christiana, *significat.*" Schleusner.

[2] *They* who use it.] "The construction in the original is imperfect. The verb wants a nominative, and the relative an antecedent. Wetstein says that the Clermont seems to have read at first ασεβειαι. Dr. Owen observes, 'that such a nominative plural properly authenticated would set the whole right.'" Bowyer.

diseased, and a total mortification of every virtue which belongs to the Christian character is the unhappy and inevitable result. Ch. II. Ver. 17.

Of which number is Hymenæus and Philetus, —17.
who have erred from the truth, saying that the re- 18.
surrection is already past[3], *and subvert the faith of some.*

A sad example of the truth of these remarks is to be found in two persons of learning and eloquence, who embraced the Christian faith, and who, impressed by the powerful evidence of truth, avowed their belief in the gospel of Jesus. I mean Hymenæus and Philetus. But these men, educated in the prejudices of a false philosophy, were disgusted with the Christian doctrine of a resurrection of the dead, as the proper ground of expectation of

[3] *The resurrection is already past.*] Dr. Benson agrees with those who conjecture that Hymenæus and Philetus contended that the resurrection was to be understood in a figurative and spiritual sense, or that it was the same as regeneration or proselytism; and so past at baptism. He observes, "that this was the doctrine of Marcion and the Gnostics." The probability is, that they were philosophers before they became Christians; and, like other philosophers, they held the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead in great contempt.

"From this," says Dr. Priestley, "it is evident that the apostle meant the Gnostics; and likewise, that he thought their tenets had an immoral tendency. They thought that the Christian resurrection could be nothing more than a new life; a state of vice being usually called a state of death, in the schools of philosophy as well as by Christian teachers. Also, believing the immortality of the soul, and holding matter in very great contempt, they were persuaded that the body would never rise again. But this was a dangerous doctrine. Whereas the doctrine of the real resurrection of Christ in the flesh, as the pattern of a real universal resurrection, was a new and striking thing, capable of producing the greatest effects."

Ch. II. Ver. 18. a future life. They have not, indeed, directly renounced the Christian faith; but have explained away its leading article. Interpreting figuratively what was intended literally, they have taught that the resurrection means nothing more than a change from heathenism to Christianity; and that it is already past with regard to those who profess the Christian religion. This doctrine has made some proselytes, and its consequences must be very pernicious. For, by setting aside this essential requisite to a future life, the resurrection of the dead, they lose all that is peculiar, and all that is valuable in the gospel revelation.

2. The apostle illustrates the great importance of adhering to the essential doctrines of the Christian religion, ver. 19—21.

19. *Nevertheless*[1], *the covenant of God*[2] *standeth*

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[1] *Nevertheless.*] ὁ μεντοι. "This refers to ver. 16. The intermediate verses should be in a parenthesis." Dr. Mangey. Bowyer.

[2] *The covenant of God.*] Pyle says that θεμελιος signifies either "a foundation of a building," or, "an indenture writing." Tillotson says that it is sometimes used as an instrument of contract. Dr. Benson adopts this sense of the word, and explains it thus: "Hymenæus and Philetus would have set aside the gospel covenant. But nevertheless the covenant of God stood firm, having the seal still hanging to it, to show that it was genuine, and in full force and obligation. On one side of the seal is an inscription denoting what God will do. On the other, an inscription denoting what Christians ought to do. And as long as the covenant stood firm, and had the seal hanging to it, all was secure and well, and their attempts to subvert it were idle, and would end in their own ruin."

The majority of commentators, with Grotius, take the word

firm, having this seal: The Lord approveth them that are his[3]. *And, Let every one who nameth the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity.* Ch. II. Ver. 19.

Whatever errors men, misled by prejudice, or puffed up with vanity, may fall into, the doctrine of Christ and the terms of acceptance with God remain unalterable. The gospel covenant is ratified

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in its primary sense, of "a foundation of a building, upon which it was not unusual to place inscriptions." "These," says Archbishop Newcome, "may have been common anciently, as they are now." See Rev. xxi. 14. But Tillotson remarks, that "σφραγις is only an inscription upon a seal, and has no relation to a foundation." See Benson's note. "*Fundamentum quod Deus posuit firmum stat. Evertunt quidem doctores mendaces quorundam fidem; totam vero ædificii molem, totam ecclesiam nunquam destruent.* Habens inscriptionem hanc: σφ. *hic est quod lapidi vel ædibus inscribitur. Olim singulas ædes habuisse inscriptiones quibus ab aliis distinguerentur demonstravit Warnekros.*" Rosenmuller.

[3] *The Lord approveth them that are his.*] This is a quotation from Numb. xvi. 5, LXX., in which the words are applied to the case of Korah and his wicked accomplices, who rebelled against Moses: "Even to-morrow will the Lord show who are his, and who are holy." And on the next day they were all destroyed: "the earth opening her mouth and swallowing them up, and all that belonged to them; and they went down alive into the pit."—"Nothing," says Dr. Benson, "could have been more pertinent to the apostle's present purpose than this allusion. Though his modesty would not permit him to speak in plainer terms, yet in writing against the judaizing impostors, he could not in a more lively and emphatical manner have pointed out their wickedness and danger in opposing him who had such clear evidences of a divine mission, than by comparing them to Korah and his accomplices, who had so daringly opposed Moses, and perished in an exemplary manner for that high act of wickedness." Dr. Benson supposes, that in the latter clause of the verse, Let him, &c. *depart* from all iniquity, there is a further allusion to Numb. xvi. 27, where it is said that the Israelites *departed* from the tabernacle of Korah, &c. And that the apostle means to warn believers to "depart from the *tents* of Hymenæus and Philetus."

Ch. II. Ver. 19. by a seal which bears a double inscription. The first declares what God hath done on his part. He hath borne his testimony to the men who were commissioned to propagate the gospel by the gifts of the holy spirit. And let those who presume to reject a doctrine so authenticated, and to treat the teachers of it with contempt, beware, lest, following the example of Korah and his company, who rejected Moses, they should incur a like fearful doom. The second inscription expresses the duty of those who are parties in the Christian covenant. Avowing Jesus as their Master, let them ever be mindful of the indispensable obligation under which they are laid, to guard with the utmost vigilance against all error both in doctrine and practice, and to withdraw from the society of those who would pervert their most sacred principles.

20. *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth,*
21. *and some to honour and some to dishonour*[1]. *If*

[1] *Some to honour, and some to dishonour.*] "The 'vessels to dishonour' are those vessels of wood and of earth which are appointed to the uses of the servants; while the 'vessels to honour' are those made of gold and silver, which are appropriated to the use of the master." Hallet's *Notes on S.S.*, vol. ii. p. 147. "Some (says Dr. Benson) by *vessels to honour* have understood the apostle Paul, Timothy, and other faithful preachers of the gospel; and by the *vessels to dishonour*, the judaizing teachers who wickedly corrupted the Christian doctrine. Whereas others suppose that they are both spoken of good men, who are more or less honourable, as they take care to avoid what is evil, and to excel in the practice of what is good, Dr. Clarke says (*Sermons*, vol. x. no. 4), "By *dishonour* meaning, not uselessness and being wholly rejected, as some under-

a man, therefore, thoroughly purify himself from such things, he will be a vessel to honour, set apart and fit for the master's service, and prepared for every good use. Ch. II. Ver. 21.

Though I have alluded to the doom of Korah, I am far from intending to insinuate that under the gospel dispensation, which is a covenant of mercy, every error shall entail the same terrible catastrophe which overwhelmed that contumacious rebel and his infatuated adherents; much less, that involuntary misapprehensions will incur eternal condemnation. Nevertheless I warn you that error in doctrine is not to be regarded as a matter of indifference. As far as it prevails, it in a degree contaminates the character, and becomes a considerable impediment to usefulness. For, as in a spacious and magnificent house there are precious vessels employed for honourable purposes, and meaner vessels for inferior uses, so, in the church of God, they who faithfully adhere to the pure uncorrupted doctrine of the gospel, and whose practice is regulated by it, will be highly esteemed by the great Master of the household, and will be honoured by him as instruments of distinguished usefulness; while others who, misled by prejudice, blend and disfigure the doctrine of Christ by a debasing mixture of human inven-

stand it, but only a less degree of value and esteem, as the nature and design of this similitude plainly require; which, though they be indeed within the house, and not wholly excluded, yet no man who has a worthy sense of religion can long content himself with being of their number without desiring further improvement."

Ch. II. Ver. 21. tions, though, because of their sincerity, they will not be absolutely cast away, yet being only qualified for inferior uses, they will be placed in less honourable stations. It is therefore the indispensable duty of every one, to the best of his ability, to clear his mind from all pernicious prejudices, that so he may lay a foundation for more extensive usefulness.

3. The apostle warns the evangelist to set a guard upon his own spirit, ver. 22.

22. *Avoid unreasonable desires* [1]. *But follow righteousness, fidelity, love, and peace, with all those who call upon the Lord with a pure heart.*

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[1] *Avoid unreasonable desires.*] νεωτερικας επιθυμιας. They who with the public version translate the clause "flee youthful lusts," forget how unsuitable this advice would be to the age and character of Timothy, who, according to Dr. Macknight, was at that time thirty-eight years of age; or, if the epistle was written during the first imprisonment, three or four years younger. Schleusner gives to νεωτερικος the sense of "*omne quod magnum est, acre atque vehemens.*" "Fuge temerarias cupiditates." Rosenmuller: "*In his autem studiis sive cupiditatibus habet locum inanis gloriæ sectatio.*" The learned writer adds, "*alii* νεωτερικον *volunt esse* novitium, *ut* cupiditates novitiæ *sint cupiditates rerum* novitiarum, *noviter repertarum et proditarum, quarum homines, juvenes præsertim, solent esse cupidi, quo ceteris videantur esse sapientiores.*" And this indeed appears to me to be the true meaning of the passage. Avoid the desire of novelty: be not eager after new things, in order to make a display, and to excite admiration; but keep to the good old track, of faith, and love, and peace, in which all men of true piety and virtue walk. Macknight, who is almost the only English expositor who seems aware of the difficulty, though he gives the common and incorrect translation, judiciously observes in his note," that the apostle does not mean sensual lusts only, but ambition, pride, love of power, rashness, and obstinacy. At the time when this epistle was written, Timothy was in the season of life which is most susceptible of these passions."

You are placed in a conspicuous situation, in which it is peculiarly incumbent upon you to keep your affections under severe discipline. Guard, therefore, vigilantly, against excess of every kind. Restrain the emotions of ambition. Be not carried away with the love of power. And do not indulge a taste for novelty; do not affect the puerile vanity of always saying new things in order to excite admiration; but be content with plain truth, and practical piety. You may possibly be under temptation occasionally to defend the purity and simplicity of evangelical truth with undue warmth of spirit. Be upon your guard against intemperate zeal. Practise universal virtue. Firmly adhere to Christian principles. Be always employed in doing good. Maintain a peaceable spirit; and as far as may be consistent with duty, live upon good terms both with believers and with unbelievers. Such is the genuine character of those who are sincere in their profession of the Christian faith. Ch. II. Ver. 22.

4. The apostle exhorts Timothy to abstain from useless controversies, and to adopt the gentlest and the most efficacious means of reclaiming those who had been betrayed into error, ver. 23—26.

But foolish and uninstructive controversies avoid, knowing that they beget wranglings[2]. 23.

[2] *Wranglings.*] "Here he plainly adverts to the doctrine of the Gnostics, whose subtle discussions he often mentions with equal dislike and contempt." Dr. Priestley. "Μαχας, ριχας,

Ch. II. Ver. 23. Many who profess to believe the gospel, but who are strangers to its true spirit, who are puffed up with self-conceit, and are desirous of corrupting the simplicity of the faith, affect to be raising questions upon subjects of a mysterious nature, which, while they wear a semblance of sublimity, are, in fact, trifling and useless, such as no person of sound understanding and of real knowledge would give himself the trouble to discuss. Such questions as these avoid with care, as leading to nothing but endless and angry debate.

24. *But the servant of the Lord ought not to wrangle, but to be gentle to all men, ready to teach, patient of wrong.*

This disputatious temper is highly unbecoming a minister of the gospel, who ought ever to bear in mind, that the service of Christ, and the promulgation of truth and holiness, not his own literary or philosophical reputation, must be his primary pursuit. In this view, it becomes him to cultivate a mild and gentle spirit, to be ready upon every occasion to communicate instruction in the most acceptable and impressive manner, and to bear with meekness and patience the angry contradictions and the perverse misrepresentations of ignorant, prejudiced, or malignant opposers, not rendering evil for evil.

25. *With meekness, instructing those who set them-*

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jurgia, lites. Gellius xiv. 5. *de duobus Grammaticis,* Clamantes, compugnantesque (μαχομενες) eos reliqui." Rosenmuller.

selves in opposition, if, by any means[1], *God may grant them a change of mind to the acknowledgement of the truth: so that being rescued by him*[2] *out of the snare of the devil, they may recover their senses to* do *the will* of God. Ch. II. Ver. 25. 26.

Far from retaliating abusive language and unkind behaviour upon those who desire to promote quarrels and divisions in the church, let the faithful minister of Christ, with good manners and good temper, set before them the evidences of Christian truth and the grounds of his own persuasion. Who knows but they may be brought to reason? who can tell but that God may in his good pleasure open their understandings to see, and their hearts to feel, the

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[1] *If, by any means.*] "Markland and Dr. Owen observe that μηποτε is used for ειποτε. See Luke iii. 15, Bowyer. Knatchbull shows that it is equivalent to ισως, *forte*." Newcome. Whitby produces many instances from the LXX. where it is used in the same sense. Gen. iii. 22, xxiv. 5.

[2] *That being rescued by him:*] *i. e.* that the opposers being rescued. "εξωγρημενοι, rescued alive." Wakefield. *by him:* i. e. by the servant of the Lord. ανανηψωσιν, "may recover their senses." Wakefield. ανανηφω, "to recover from intoxication, to recover reason after a temporary stupefaction." Harwood. *out of the snare of the devil:* the false accuser, the God of the heathen world, the entanglements of heathenism—to *do* the will *of God:* εις το εκεινου θελημα, to the will of *him*, the remote antecedent, *God*. I agree with Mr. Wakefield and Dr. Harwood in referring αυτου to δηλος Κυριος as its antecedent; and together with Grotius, Newcome, Whitby, Benson, and others, in referring εκεινου to Θεος. This makes the sense easy and intelligible. The exposition of Dr. Benson is very judicious: "And that they may awake out of this intoxicated sleep which would otherwise end in death, being taken alive out of the snare of the devil, by him, that is, by the faithful servant of the Lord, that for the future they may do the will of God."

Ch. II. Ver. 26. light and power of truth when plainly and fully exhibited to view, and thus induce them to surrender their prejudices and their pride? In this way may you and others, by the exercise of prudence and forbearance, save from destruction and bring to their sound understandings those who are intoxicated with self-sufficiency and prejudice, and recover to purity of faith, and the practice of duty, those who are now the most determined and malignant enemies of the gospel.

SECTION VI.

Ch. III. *THE APOSTLE describes the bad characters of hypocritical professors, and the wicked artifices of seducing teachers, who would in future time appear in the church, but whose artful and malignant opposition would in the end be baffled and exposed.* Ch. iii. 1—9.

1. The apostle warns his friend of the approach of difficult times, and describes the characters of false professors who would endeavour to subvert the truth, ver. 1—5.

Ver. 1. *But know this, that in the last days difficult times*[1] *will come.*

[1] *In the last days difficult times,* &c.] Dr. Whitby and others interpret this prophecy of the approaching dissolution of the Jewish state, and of the obstinate and increasing wickedness of the Jews and judaizing teachers. In confirmation of this hy-

In the course of your ministry, my dear friend, short as that period has been, you have known many who have totally apostatized from the faith; you have seen some who, from vanity, or shame, or prejudice, have been desirous to corrupt the doctrine of the gospel; you have been the mournful witness to some whose characters have been a disgrace to their profession. But I solemnly warn you, Timothy, that though my course will soon be finished, you will probably live to see times much worse than any which have hitherto occurred. For, strange as it may seem, in those awful periods that are advancing, men will, from one inducement or another, Ch. III. Ver 1.

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pothesis, it is observed that the phrase, *the last days*, often bears this sense in the New Testament; that the caution, ver. 5, implies that the persons here described, and with whom the evangelist was to avoid all intercourse, were then in existence; and the prediction, ver. 9, that these delusions should be exposed and abandoned in a short time, agrees with the system of the judaizing teachers and with no other. But this interpretation depends very much upon the sense of the words εσχαται ἡμεραι, *last days;* which, Dr. Macknight remarks, are sometimes used to express *futurity* in general. See Gen. xlix. 1. And in this sense the prophecy of speedy destruction might be applied as properly to Gnosticism as to Judaism. And it is difficult to say what propriety there would be in warning Timothy, who lived at Ephesus, against the bad principles and practices of the Jews: many, therefore, are inclined to think that the apostle had Gnosticism chiefly in view. But, as it is certain that the prophets did not always understand the full import of their own predictions, (see 1 Pet. i. 10, 11,) and as some parts of the description of the false teachers are thought to be characteristic of the religious orders of the Romish communion, it is not impossible, as Dr. Benson and Dr. Priestley contend, that the grand apostasy might be the more immediate object of the spirit of prophecy in this passage.—"*Patet ex com. 5. Paulum agere de iis, quæ Timotheo vivente eventura putabat.*" Rosenmuller.

CH. III. profess the Christian religion, whose temper is directly the reverse of the Christian spirit.

VER. 2. *For these men*[1] *will be selfish, covetous, arrogant, proud, evil-speakers, undutiful to parents,*
3. *ungrateful, unholy, destitute of natural affection*[2], *implacable*[3], *slanderers, intemperate, savage*[4], *enemies to goodness,*
4. *treacherous, headstrong, conceited*[5], *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,*
5. *retaining the form of godliness*[6], *but rejecting its power: from such also turn away.*

By the spirit of prophecy I announce to you, that before the awful advent of our Lord and Master, whether that event be nearer or more remote, men who bear the Christian name, and who profess to be followers of the humble, the self-denying, the meek, and the holy Jesus, will act a part the very

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[1] *These men.*] οἱ ἀνθρωποι· the men to whom the prophecy referred: professing Christians. See Wakefield.

[2] *Destitute of natural affection.*] στοργη, the natural affection which parents have to their children, and even brutes to their young. As children would be undutiful, ver. 2, so parents would be unnatural.

[3] *Implacable.*] "irreconcileable." Wakefield. "covenant-breakers." Newcome. The word ασπονδοι has both these significations.

[4] *Savage.*] ανημεροι, "immitis, immansuetus. Αγριος, *Suidas.*" Rosenmuller.

[5] *Conceited.*] τετυφωμενοι, "infatuated." Wakefield.

[6] *Retaining the form,* &c.] "These vices," says Dr. Priestley, "were to abound in the last times, and among men professing godliness, and therefore in the Christian church. That persons of that character then existed, is evident from Timothy being warned of them; and they could not be any other than the Gnostic teachers. It should seem, therefore, that in the apostle's idea the evil had then begun to operate."

reverse of that which his law prescribes, and his example exhibits. Ch. III. Ver. 5.

With all their pretensions to superior excellence, self-interest and the love of money will be their predominant passion. Valuing themselves upon their pretended knowledge, or upon their zeal for external forms, they will treat with supercilious disdain those whom they regard as their inferiors in station or privilege; nor will they hesitate to use the most contumelious language in speaking of those who may oppose their pretensions or their party. These false professors will sacrifice their nearest kindred to superstitious principles, or interested considerations, and under the hypocritical pretence of duty to God, they will neglect those offices of filial piety which are due to the superior wisdom, or increasing infirmities, of their parents. To God and man they will return evil for good. They will forsake the paths of virtue[7]. They will be as negligent in the care which they owe to their children, as in the attentions due to their parents. Under pretence of zeal for religion, they will keep no faith with men of opposite principles, and will wantonly violate their most sacred engagements. They will calumniate without scruple those who are the unfortunate objects of their envy and jealousy, how unspotted soever their character may be. They will impose no restraint upon their appetites and passions. They

[7] *Will forsake*, &c.] ανοσιοι, qui fœda patrant, *quibus nihil sanctum et venerandum est.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. III. Ver. 5. will show no mercy to those who have offended them; but will be fierce and violent in their expressions of resentment. Conscious of their own depravity, they will hate excellence in others, and will be the declared enemies of all good men. They will betray the secrets of those who unadvisedly place confidence in them, and who may intrust them with their most hidden purposes and thoughts. Conceited with the fancy of superior wisdom, they will scorn to ask advice or to consult the dictates of prudence. They will pretend to raptures of devotion; but will, in fact, be the votaries of sensual pleasure, and will render their religious profession subservient to the gratification of their passions. They will make great pretensions to piety, and will be zealous for the forms of religion; but will be utter strangers to its genuine spirit and practical influence. It will be some time before these great corruptions in doctrine and practice have reached their utmost limits. But the spirit of the apostasy is already beginning to work. And as I before cautioned you to avoid errors in doctrine, I now faithfully and solemnly warn you against the more fatal errors in practice. Let me conjure you to renounce all kind of intercourse with men whose characters resemble what I have now described, how fair and how pompous soever their profession may be.

2. The apostle describes the artifices of these hypocritical teachers, which, nevertheless, will be even-

tually detected, and will expose their authors to merited disgrace, ver. 6—9. Ch. III.

For of such are those who insinuate themselves[1] *into families, and captivate weak women, laden with sins, led by various passions, ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* Ver. 6. 7.

Of these hypocritical and vicious teachers there are none against whom it is more necessary to be upon your guard, than against fawning sycophants, who assume a modest and gentle demeanour in order to introduce themselves into the houses of those whom they mean to seduce, and who, by their smooth discourse and accommodating doctrine, win the hearts of silly women, who, conscious of their infirmities, are desirous to reconcile the profession of religion with the gratification of their passions. These weak and vicious females often pretend to be seeking after Christian instruction, but the depravity of their hearts effectually prevents their ever attaining a truly correct and practical knowledge of revealed truth.

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[1] *Who insinuate themselves,* &c.] Dr. Benson interprets this "of the practices of the religious orders of the church of Rome." Dr. Priestley observes, that "for such low cunning the priests and monks of that communion have been notorious, and that the specious insinuating manners of the Gnostics were also noted by the apostles and other Christian writers." He also thinks that the apostle here refers to the nice subtilties of the Gnostic doctrines, "than which nothing could be more unintelligible." Οἱ ἐνδυνοντες· "who creep or slide in like a snake." Benson, Rosenmuller. Such characters are but too common in all ages and among all denominations.

Ch. III. Ver. 8. *And as Jannes and Jambres*[1] *withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth;* being *men of corrupt minds, disapproved*[2] *concerning the faith.*

9. *But they shall not proceed very far; for their folly will be made evident to all men, as that of those* men *also was.*

Nor is it much to be wondered at that these silly creatures become dupes to the artifices of their false teachers, who, to promote their own sinister views, inculcate systems of doctrine which give encouragement to licentiousness of manners. For as the magicians of Egypt practised their contemptible artifices to elude the authority of Moses, and to encourage Pharaoh to refuse the demand which he made in the name of God, so do these men, in order to maintain that ascendancy which they have obtained over the minds of their proselytes, resist by every artifice in their power the efforts of those faithful teachers who would enlighten their understandings with Christian truth. And being men of corrupt hearts, destitute of all virtuous principle, and, notwithstanding all their professions, grossly ignorant of the Christian faith, and disowned by all virtuous

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[1] *Jannes and Jambres.*] The names of these magicians are not mentioned in the Pentateuch, but they occur in the Targum of Jonathan upon Exod. vii. 11, and in both the Talmuds. Also in the writings of Numenius the Pythagorean. *Origen contr. Celsum*, lib. 4. See Priestley.

[2] *Disapproved.*] αδοκιμοι· a metaphor taken from metals, which are rejected if they be not pure, and according to the standard, Rom. i. 28; 1 Cor. ix. 27; Tit. i. 16. "*quorum sententiæ de religione minime probandæ, ideoque rejiciendæ sunt, et repudiandæ.*" Rosenmuller.

and sincere believers, they hesitate at no means, however scandalous, for the accomplishment of their design. But these gross corrupters of the Christian doctrine, however successful for a time, shall not be suffered to pass beyond the prescribed limits. For the day of reformation shall arrive at the appointed season, when the crimes of these hypocrites shall be brought to light, and they and their delusions shall sink into universal contempt, similar to that of the impostors of Egypt, when, being no longer able to continue their frauds, they were constrained to acknowledge their own disgrace, and with shame and ignominy to confess, that those splendid works which they had calumniated as the sleight of men, were, in truth, no other than the finger of God. Ch. III. Ver. 9.

SECTION VII.

The apostle exhorts Timothy, after his own example, to adhere faithfully, at all hazards, to the simplicity of the gospel, the truth of which was attested even by the scriptures of the Old Testament, upon which the apostle pronounces a just commendation. Ch. iii. 10—17.

1. The apostle reminds Timothy of his labours and sufferings for the gospel, of the purity of his motives, of his Christian temper, and of the deliverances he had experienced; and appeals to the

Ch. III. evangelist as a witness to the truth of his declarations, ver. 10, 11.

Ver. 10. *But thou hast intimately known*[1] *my doctrine, conduct*[2], *purpose, fidelity, long-suffering, love, pa-*
11. *tience, persecutions, sufferings. What things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra*[3]*! What*

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[1] *Intimately known.*] "παρακολουθέω, proprie, *æquis passibus incedo cum alio, nec a latere discedo unquam, diligenter examino, perscrutor.*" Schleusner. See Raphelius *Obs. in Luc.* i. 3. The apostle probably refers to the intimate acquaintance which Timothy had with his character and views, in consequence of his having been so long his friend and associate.

[2] *Conduct,*] or, manner of life, ἀγωγή. "*Vitæ institutum, vivendi rationem, et modum.*"—"Scipio followed a different course of life: ἀγωγὴν τοῦ βίου." Polybius. See Raphelius *in loc.*

[3] *What things,* &c.] I follow, but with diffidence, the punctuation of Battier, in Bowyer; who places a full stop at πάθημασιν, and a note of admiration at the end of the following sentences: it suits the construction of the original, and gives a spirit to the passage, but I doubt whether it is quite agreeable to Paul's usual style of writing. It has been before observed, that it is unaccountable that Paul should have referred to events so remote, without taking the least notice of his long imprisonment at Cesarea and at Rome, if this letter was written, as is commonly supposed, in the apostle's second imprisonment. The events to which he here alludes are related in Acts xiii. xiv. At Antioch in Pisidia, the Jews excited the principal inhabitants of the city to expel the apostles from the place, ch. xiii. 50, 51. They fled to Iconium, where, after having preached the gospel with great success, the unbelieving Jews stirred up a tumult to assault and stone the apostles; who, being apprized of it, escaped to Lystra, ch. xiv. 1—7. Lystra was the birth-place, or at least the residence, of Timothy, who must therefore have been well informed of all that passed. Here Barnabas and Paul could with difficulty restrain the people from offering a sacrifice to them, in consequence of their having healed a lame man. But afterwards, at the instigation of the Jews from Antioch and Iconium, the populace stoned Paul, and thinking him dead drew him out of the city; but he soon recovered, and the next day accompanied Barnabas to Derbe, ver. 8—20.

persecutions I endured! Yet the Lord rescued me out of them all. Ch. III. Ver. 11.

There are some professors of the Christian religion who accommodate their principles to their secular interest; or who at least, being speculative believers, conform to the fashions of the world in order to escape persecution. The reverse of this mean and dishonourable dissimulation has ever been my conduct, as you my beloved pupil, my intimate friend, my chosen associate, are fully apprized. You, Timothy, are perfectly acquainted with the doctrine which I have taught, and in which I was completely instructed by Jesus Christ. You know how far my practice has been correspondent with my teaching: to you I have communicated all my purposes of usefulness, and the plans which I had formed for carrying those purposes into effect. You have been witness to the fidelity with which I discharged the trust reposed in me, not presuming to corrupt the doctrine of Christ, in order to make it more palatable to the hearers, nor declining to preach it to the Gentiles equally with the Jews. You also know the forbearance which I have exercised under great provocations, the kindness which I manifested even to my bitterest enemies, and the meekness and fortitude with which I supported the severest trials. You well know what these persecutions and sufferings were; some of which occurred to me in your native place, at the very commencement of our acquaintance, when your young and tender spirit would be most strongly impressed and most deeply wounded by

Ch. III. Ver. 11. them. I cannot myself, even at this distance of time, recollect them without horror. What indignities did I sustain from the machinations of the unbelieving Jews at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra! And in the last place in particular, your native town, what imminent danger did I encounter, when these vile emissaries nearly accomplished their murderous purposes, by persuading the thoughtless populace, who but just before had been with difficulty restrained from worshiping me as a God, to stone me as a malefactor who was not fit to live! It is indeed wonderful that I am still alive: and I can ascribe my preservation to nothing less than to the seasonable and even miraculous interposition of God, to rescue me from the malice of my persecutors, and to continue my life and my capacity for service as long as it shall be his will to employ me in his work.

2. The apostle declares that similar to his must be the condition of all faithful professors of the gospel, while impostors and their abettors should for a time proceed with little opposition, ver. 12, 13.

12. *Yea, and indeed*[1], *all who resolve to live religiously in Christ Jesus*[2] *will suffer persecution.*

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[1] *Yea, and indeed.*] και παντες δε κ. τ. λ. Dr. Benson remarks (after Hutchinson) the elegance of inserting δε after και in the beginning of a sentence, when an author is going to add something more or greater than he has said already. Comp. Acts v. 32. See Xenophon *Cyrop.* lib. i. p. 63, 8vo, with Hutchinson's note.

[2] *In Christ Jesus:*] *i. e.* "as Christians." Newcome. Dr.

Nor is my case by any means singular; for though my situation and character, as the apostle of the Gentiles, expose me to peculiar dangers and sufferings, yet in fact all who are determined to profess Christian truth, and to lead a Christian life, must expect to meet with similar trials, and will in some shape or other be persecuted, either by misguided professors of the gospel, or open enemies to it. And you, my beloved friend, as well as others, if you are an upright, faithful, zealous and active minister of Christ, must expect a similar treatment. Ch. III. Ver. 12.

But bad men and impostors[3] *will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*[4]. 13.

Very different indeed will be the condition of those who corrupt the gospel to accomplish their own sinister purposes. They will escape the persecutions to which fidelity would have exposed them,

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Priestley observes, that "here the apostle opposes his principles and conduct to those of the Gnostics, who, in general, avoided all persecution, by complying with the demands of the times, and contented themselves with speculating concerning religion."

[3] *Impostors.*] γοητες. Dr. Benson observes, "that the word properly signifies *sorcerers, magicians, jugglers,* like Jannes and Jambres. "Γοης, *incantator, præstigiator, qui præstigiis, aliisve malis artibus imponit.*" Schleusner. They who interpret this passage as a prophecy of the grand apostasy, suppose this word to be an allusion to the pretended miracles of the church of Rome.

[4] *Deceiving,* &c.] *q. d.* Bad men and their seducers, deceivers, and those who are willingly deceived by them, shall grow worse and worse. Dr. Priestley observes, "One error leads to another, and one vice leads to another; and the degree of infatuation and wickedness to which some men arrive, and which they will even apologize for, would not be credited, if both history and observation did not prove it."

Ch. III. Ver. 13. and will stand high in the estimation of those who would have rejected truth with abhorrence. So shall these crafty impostors, and their willingly deluded disciples, the deceived and the deceivers, go on from error to error, and from crime to crime, till they are in the end overtaken by those judgements which are in reserve for the obstinate and the impenitent.

3. The apostle exhorts his friend to adhere firmly to those doctrines which he had learned of him, and which were confirmed by the Jewish scriptures, into the knowledge of which he had been early initiated, ver. 14, 15.

14. *But continue thou in* the doctrines *which thou hast learned*[1], *and been convinced of*[2], *knowing from whom*[3] *thou hast learned* them.

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[1] *Continue in* the doctrines *which thou hast learned.*] Dr. Benson observes in an excellent note upon this passage, that "fierce controversies and warm disputes create contentions among Christians, and divide them into parties and factions. They also tend to the subversion of the hearers. If once you unhinge some persons, and cause them to doubt of the truth of what they learned in younger life, they are ready to doubt of every thing, and throw off all religion as a fallacy. But notwithstanding this, what mistakes have been imbibed in education ought to be rooted out, though gradually, and with a gentle hand. And disputes and controversies are so far from being of a dangerous tendency, that they are the very things which preserve knowledge in the world, and rouse men to attention. Let human authority take away the liberty of free debate, and thick darkness will soon follow. Had Timothy been taught by the Judaizers, and brought up from his infancy in wrong principles, St. Paul would not have exhorted him to have continued in the things which he had learned and been assured of. But he was to continue in them because he knew of whom he had learned them: viz. of a true apostle; and that they were agreeable to

You see, Timothy, I hold out no secular advantages to induce you to persevere in your Christian profession. I have even faithfully warned you of the dangers and persecutions which in present circumstances are the inseparable concomitants of the faithful fearless discharge of the Christian ministry. Yet do not desert the cause. I solemnly charge you, at every hazard, to adhere firmly, and with an unwavering spirit, to those inestimable truths which you have learned of me. You certainly know that I am neither a wicked man nor an impostor. You have had abundant proof of my apostolical mission, and of the divine authority of my doctrine. Let no consideration induce you to desert the path of truth. Ch. III. Ver. 14.

And that from a child thou hast known the sacred writings[4], *which are able to make thee* 15.

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the scriptures of the Old Testament, with which he had been acquainted from his infancy."

[2] *Convinced of.*] επιστωθης. "convinced of by proof." Wakefield.

[3] *From whom.*] παρα τινος. Some good copies read τινων, in the plural number. Some suppose that Timothy had received instruction from Barnabas as well as Paul, as he certainly had from his pious mother and grandmother, to whose early care in instructing him in the Jewish scriptures the apostle immediately refers.

[4] *From a child,* &c.] Dr. Priestley remarks, that "by *scriptures* the apostle could only mean the Jewish scriptures, in the knowledge of which Timothy had been educated by his mother and grandmother, who were both Jewesses, though his father was a Gentile. The Jews were, and to this day are, remarkable for making their children acquainted with the scriptures. What a reflection is this upon Christian countries, and even upon this of ours, in many parts of which a great majority of the people cannot read at all, and with regard to many of whom better things might be expected! though their children

Ch. III. Ver. 15. *wise*[1] *unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus*[2].

You have a still further inducement to adhere faithfully to the Christian doctrine, inasmuch as it has been your felicity to have been early and carefully instructed, by your pious parents, in the Jewish scriptures, and especially the prophetic writings. And whatever false interpretations some may give to them, or whatever erroneous conclusions they may draw from them, be assured, that when properly understood, they bear convincing testimony to the truth of the Christian doctrine. Not only do the prophecies receive their proper accomplishment in Jesus of Nazareth, but the patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian dispensations, are all essential parts of the same wise and beneficent system which infinite wisdom has formed for the gradual instruction and amelioration of mankind. So that

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are taught to read, they are very indifferent about their instruction in those things which it most of all concerns them to know. To the Jewish scriptures the apostle exhorts Timothy to join the study of Christianity, and they both make but one great scheme of revelation, and can never be separated."

[1] *Make thee wise.*] "σοφισαι has here the sense of the Hebrew conjugation hiphil." Benson.

[2] *Through faith,* &c.] The apostle urges Timothy to perseverance in the Christian doctrine, for which he assigns two reasons; the first is, that he knew that he had received it from an apostle of Christ, an authorized and qualified teacher. The second reason is, that he had been early instructed in the Jewish scriptures. Consequently the apostle's meaning must be, that those scriptures well understood contain satisfactory evidence of the truth of the Christian religion. This observation, therefore, is to be understood of the inspired prophetic scriptures, and probably of them alone.

the right apprehension of the sacred writings of the Old Testament will lead you to believe in Jesus as the true Messiah, and by a practical regard to his doctrine, which is the truest wisdom, to secure that ultimate and everlasting felicity which will be an infinite compensation for every temporary loss or suffering. Ch. III. Ver. 15.

4. The apostle concludes his observations and advices with a high and just encomium upon the Jewish scriptures, ver. 16, 17.

All scripture inspired by God[3] is *also profit-* 16.

[3] *All scripture*, &c.] Πασα γραφη, θεοπνευστος και ωφελιμος, κ. τ. λ. The word και is wanting, Dr. Benson says, in one MS., and certainly in the Syriac, Arabic, and Vulgate versions. See Griesbach. It is omitted by Grotius, and in the versions of Wakefield and Harwood.—If this reading be adopted, the apostle does not define what scripture is divinely inspired; but if the και should be retained, and it has the authority of manuscripts in its favour, the common version may be allowed: *All scripture* is *given by inspiration of God.* In this sense the word *scripture* must necessarily be restrained to the sense which suits the connexion: that is, to the *prophetic* scriptures, of which alone the apostle is treating. To understand it, as some do, as a general authoritative assertion of the plenary inspiration of all the books of the Old Testament, is, to say the least, very injudicious; and it is hard to believe that the apostle intended to make a declaration so palpably erroneous. But he probably intended no such thing: he referred only to the prophetic scriptures, which, if genuine, are unquestionably inspired. Archbishop Newcome supposes that Paul not only means to include all the Old Testament, but as much of the New as was then written; but it is plain that the apostle is only treating of those scriptures which Timothy had learned in his childhood, and which contained those proofs of the divine mission of Christ which were necessary to furnish the man of God, the Christian minister and evangelist, for the good work of reasoning with, and converting, or confuting, the Jews. "πα. γρ. κ. τ. λ.

Ch. III. Ver. 17. *able*[1] *for instruction, for conviction*[2]*, for correction*[3]*, for discipline in righteousness*[4]*, that the man*

Either all scripture is given by inspiration, as Chrysostom and most of the protestant interpreters; or, omitting the comma after γραφη, 'All divinely inspired scripture is *also* profitable,' as Grotius and most of the popish commentators. Whichsoever way it is pointed, the expression must not be understood to comprehend the books of the New Testament which were not yet collected together, but the sacred writings of the Old Testament, mentioned ver. 15, as Michaelis observes." Bowyer. "The writers of the New Testament," says Bishop Barrington in Bowyer's Appendix, "always distinguish between γραφη and γραφαι. The former signifies some portion of scripture, the latter the scripture in general. 'Every portion of scripture,' says the apostle, 'inspired by God, is profitable,'" &c.

"The intention of the apostle," says Dr. Priestley, "was not to make any declaration concerning the inspiration of the scriptures, but to show the proper use of them in inculcating those good moral principles from which so many persons at that time departed; and it will sufficiently justify his thus incidentally calling the scriptures *inspired*, if they were written by prophets or men inspired by God, or if any thing that they wrote had been delivered by particular commission from God, which, no doubt, many things contained in the scriptures were. But such men were certainly capable of expressing them in words, and of committing them to writing, without any further inspiration; and therefore there is no occasion to suppose that, as writers, they had any inspiration at all. Also, together with what they delivered as from God, which is easily distinguished, they might mix advices, &c. of their own, which, with the best intentions, should discover the natural weakness of men. The weakness of the apostles, as men and as writers, in reality proves that the doctrine they delivered was not their own, and that the power by which they were supported was from God only."

[1] Is *also profitable*.] That the scriptures are of great general use for instruction and edification, cannot be denied: but this is not the apostle's meaning here. His object is to show that the prophetic scriptures are admirably adapted to qualify an evangelist to preach the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, and he distinctly shows in what particulars they are useful to the Christian preacher. This view of the apostle's design has been too

of God[5] *may be complete*[6], *perfectly fitted for every good work.* Ch. III. Ver. 17.

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much overlooked by commentators, and this oversight has misled many in their interpretation of the text.

[2] *For conviction.*] προς ελεγχον. See Harwood and Benson. "ελεγχος, propriè, *demonstratio, probatio, quæ fit argumentis certis et rationibus indubitatis, qua rei certitudo efficitur, argumentum.*" Schleusner. See Heb. xi. 1. The apostle's meaning is, that the prophetic scriptures of the Old Testament supply the Christian teacher with decisive arguments in favour of the divine mission of Christ.

[3] *For correction.*] "προς επανορθωσιν, propriè, *correctio ejus quod incurvatum est. Omnis restitutio in integrum et meliorem statum. Apud Polybium; de correctione erroris et falsæ opinionis.*" Schleusner, and Raphelius. The apostle means that the right understanding of the Jewish scriptures would correct the erroneous opinions into which the Jews had fallen concerning the nature and design of the dispensation of the Messiah.

[4] *Discipline in righteousness.*] "παιδεια, *omnis institutio et disciplina puerilis. Quævis alia institutio et disciplina, qua quis utitur ad formandos et imbuendos animos.*" Schleusner. The apostle means that the Jewish scriptures explicitly declare the terms upon which the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom are to be obtained; the institute which it will require, the character which it will form, and to which its promises (δικαιοσυνη, *its justification,*) are annexed. See Jerem. xxxi. 31—34, Heb. viii. 8.

[5] *The man of God.*] This was a title which was given to the prophets under the old dispensation. See 2 Kings iv. 40, &c. It is applied to Timothy as an evangelist endued with extraordinary powers, 1 Tim. vi. 11; and may perhaps be intended to express Christian ministers in general. See Newcome. Dr. Benson, on 2 Pet. i. 21, says, that "the expression *man of God* occurs about fifty times in the Old Testament, and always signifies an *inspired person*, or *prophet.*"

[6] *Complete.*] αρτιος. The Clermont and Corbey copies read τελειος, and the old Italic and Vulgate *perfectus.* "Αρτιος, *integer, perfectus, omnibus numeris absolutus.*" Schleusner; who says that it is a word used by arithmeticians and geometers to express two figures or numbers which exactly coincide. Raphelius (*Annot. Philol.*) observes, that it is used by Herodotus in the sense of *paratus*, ready. The apostle's meaning is, that the evangelist having been instructed by himself in the Christian doctrine, and being also perfectly conversant with the

Ch. III. Ver. 17.

Of those books which are held in the highest estimation by the Hebrew nation, certain portions are, and others are not, of divine authority. A sound judgement will discriminate: and whatever respect may be due to the productions of wise and good men, the inspired scriptures alone are entitled to our entire confidence, and are the only authority to which we can with propriety appeal as a confirmation of the Christian revelation. With respect to the inspired scripture, therefore, I may say, that the whole is profitable and edifying, and that every part has its appropriate use. One portion of the Jewish scriptures is calculated to instruct those who peruse and understand them, in the advent of the Messiah, in his character and offices, and in the nature of that spiritual kingdom which he would be authorized to establish. The prophetic writings also contain the most convincing evidence of the mission of Christ, having received their proper accomplishment in him, and in no other person. The same scriptures are likewise well adapted to correct the extravagant errors into which the Jews are so prone to fall, both with respect to the temporal nature of the Messiah's kingdom, and to the perpetuity and universal obligation of the Mosaic institute. Finally, the Jewish scriptures themselves plainly teach the proper discipline of the new dispensation, as consisting, not,

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Jewish scriptures, would be completely qualified for the performance of every branch of his office of preaching the gospel, both to Jew and Gentile.

like the old covenant, in the observation of outward rites, but in the love of God and man, and in the practice of universal virtue. So that by a careful perusal of the writings of the Old Testament, in connexion with the instructions which you have received from me, you will become complete for the ministry of the gospel; an evangelist perfectly qualified for the honourable and successful discharge of the various duties of your arduous office, whether for the conversion of the heathen, or for the conviction or confutation of the Jews. Such is the high estimation in which I hold the sacred oracles of the Jews, though I am calumniated by my adversaries as despising and disparaging their authority, and as endeavouring to subvert their design. Ch. III. Ver. 17.

SECTION VIII.

The apostle gives a solemn charge to Timothy to be faithful, firm, and persevering, in the duties of his office, and enforces the charge by various important considerations. Chap. iv. 1—8. Ch. IV.

1. The apostle presses upon the evangelist diligence, earnestness, patience and perseverance, in the duties of his ministry, from the consideration of the divine inspection, and the account which he would give to Christ at the great day. Ch. iv. ver. 1, 2.

Ch. IV. Ver. 1. *I solemnly charge* thee *therefore, in the presence of God, and of Jesus Christ*[1], *who will hereafter judge the living and the dead, and by his appear-*
2. *ance, and by his kingdom*[2], *proclaim the word, be urgent in season, out of season*[3], *convince, reprove, exhort, with the utmost patience of instruction*[4].

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[1] *Of Jesus Christ.*] The oldest copies and versions have not the words τȣ Κυριȣ, *of the Lord,* and they are also omitted in Griesbach's edition and Newcome's translation. *In the presence of Jesus Christ,* that is, as though Jesus Christ were now actually present with me or you. If Jesus Christ is to judge the world in person, he must, no doubt, be personally and intimately acquainted with the characters and conduct of men. But probably the event may not exactly correspond with the literal signification of the words. And it is by events only that prophecy can be truly interpreted.

[2] *And by his appearance,* &c.] The best copies read και for κατα. See Griesbach and Newcome. *q. d.* I charge you, as you will answer for it at his glorious appearance, when he shall come to take possession of his kingdom.

[3] *In season, out of season.*] ευκαιρως, ακαιρως. "when you can do it in safety, and when it will expose you to danger; in private, as well as in public; on Lord's days, and on other days." Benson. Dr. Priestley observes, that "there cannot be any charge more solemn than this; and as the duties here enumerated are no other than those of every minister of the gospel, not only ought all ministers to be zealous in the discharge of what they apprehend to be their duty, of which they are to give so solemn an account, but the people ought also to bear with their zeal, which is intended for their good, though in consequence of their not giving the same attention to the subject of religion, they may not immediately perceive the importance of some articles on which their ministers may see reason to lay great stress."

[4] *With the utmost patience of instruction.*] Dr. Benson says, "It is observable that the apostle never mentions patience and lenity when he putteth Titus upon reproving; whereas he frequently recommends them to Timothy, ch. ii. 24, 25, iii. 10. Whether Timothy's being of a warmer temper than Titus, or the obstinacy of the persons with whom Titus had to do, might occasion this difference in the apostle's exhortations, does not now plainly appear."

You, O Timothy! have been favoured with advantages beyond almost all others, to qualify you for the honourable and sacred office with which you are invested. You have enjoyed the instructions and the example of an apostle, you are well acquainted with the Jewish scriptures, you are endowed with extraordinary gifts and powers. Let then your exertions be proportioned to your qualifications. Ch. IV. Ver. 2.

I solemnly adjure you therefore, in the name and presence of that great God who searches the hearts, who communicates to all their several talents and qualifications for usefulness, and who strictly observes how these talents are employed; I adjure you further, in the name and as in the presence of our revered master Jesus Christ, who is appointed to the high and glorious office of judging the living and the dead, at whose tribunal we must hereafter appear, who will make inquisition into our conduct, and reward us according to our works: Yes, my friend, I solemnly adjure you, by the approaching solemnities of that awful day, to which, as the disciples of Jesus, we look forward with anxious expectation, when Jesus shall appear again in pomp and majesty, to raise the dead and to judge the world; and by the glories of that celestial empire which will then commence, and in the honours and the triumphs of which we hope, and, if faithful to our profession, shall certainly bear a conspicuous part: upon all these important and weighty considerations I adjure and charge you, as a Christian evangelist, proclaim the gospel upon all occasions, and in every

Ch. IV. Ver. 2. place, with energy and courage; press home the glorious doctrine upon the hearts of your hearers, not only at stated seasons of public worship and instruction, but upon every opportunity of communicating evangelical truth which may accidentally occur, and watch for such opportunities, whether in public or in private: confute the opposers and the corrupters of the gospel, and establish the truth by the most convincing evidence: reprove those who are departing from the simplicity of the faith, or whose conduct is a disgrace to their profession: exhort your hearers to perseverance in Christian doctrine, and in virtuous practice. Let me add, that though I desire you to be zealous, I would enter a caution against heat of temper and imprudent zeal. Let patience and forbearance accompany your instructions. Indulge no resentment against those who are unwilling to listen to your doctrine, who even treat it with contempt, and load you with reproach. Meekly persevere in the performance of your duty, and leave the result to God.

2. The apostle enforces the exhortation, from the consideration of the increasing number of unfaithful teachers, and of prejudiced and immoral hearers, ver. 3—5.

3. *For a time will come, when* men *will not endure this salutary doctrine*[1], *but to soothe their ears*[2]

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[1] *Salutary doctrine.*] ὑγιαινουσης, *sound, wholesome, healthful doctrine.* "That is sound doctrine," says Dr. Benson, "which

will multiply to themselves teachers according to their own inclinations, and will turn away their attention from truth, and will go aside to fables[3]. Ch. IV. Ver. 4.

Perhaps you are ready to complain that men are unwilling to hear the gospel, and you are thereby discouraged from preaching it. But be assured, Timothy, that, bad as the state of things in that respect now is, it will in a short time be much worse. You may now teach the plain unsophisticated truths of the Christian religion, and may enforce its moral precepts, and you will have many hearers who will be instructed, pleased, and edified, with your doctrine. But in a few years the case will be altered. Men professing Christianity will not endure to hear those salutary truths which would make them wiser

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promotes a holy life. And it is the love of vice which renders men averse to sound doctrine, and puts them upon following such teachers as will gratify their humours and inclinations; and please their ears or fancies, without attacking or condemning their opinions and their vices."

[2] *But to soothe their ears.*] So Wakefield. Gr. "having itching ears." For this collocation of the words, see Markland *apud* Bowyer.

[3] *To fables.*] Dr. Priestley says, "The doctrines to which the apostle here alludes were undoubtedly those of the Gnostics. He did not live long enough to see the rise of other and greater corruptions of Christianity, though they were in some respects of a similar nature. Had the apostle lived to have seen the rise and progress of such doctrines as the trinity, original sin, predestination, and atonement, his indignation would have risen much higher than it did against any doctrines held by the Gnostics, because they were much further removed from the genuine principles of Christianity. Compared with these doctrines, which infringe upon the great article of the unity of God, and which derogate from the equitable principles of his moral government, the notions of the Gnostics were only idle fables."

Ch. IV. Ver. 4. and better. They will become very nice and captious in their judgement concerning their teachers. And in the choice of instructors each will expect to have his own taste gratified in preference to the edification and improvement of all. And they will chiefly prize and value those instructors who will teach them how to reconcile the hope of future happiness with the gratification of their passions. For this reason they will desert the simple intelligible doctrine of the gospel, and a serious plain practical ministry, and will delight in nothing but either the charms of eloquence, or those wild, abstruse, and fictitious notions which, while they perplex and confound their understandings, contribute nothing to the improvement of their character.

5. *But be thou watchful upon all* occasions[1], *endure evil treatment*[2], *perform the work of an evangelist, fully execute thy ministry*[3].

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[1] *Be watchful.*] νηφε εν πασι, "be thou sober on all occasions." Wakefield. "maintain a severe and universal temperance." Harwood. This is the proper sense of the word νηφω, and it is included in the exposition; but the word also signifies to watch, and this sense best suits the connexion. See Newcome, Benson, and Schleusner.—Timothy must be very much altered if he needed to be cautioned against intemperance. See 1 Tim. v. 23.

[2] *Endure evil treatment.*] See Macknight. "patiently bear the ill treatment which the enemies of the gospel will give thee." "κακοπαθησον, endure hardship." Wakefield. "encounter difficulties." Harwood. "suffer hardships." Newcome.

[3] *Fully execute thy ministry.*] πληροφορησον. "fulfill thy ministry." Newcome. Comp. ver. 17. "Perhaps πληρωσον, as Luke xiii. 25. Col. iv. 17." Mangey *apud* Bowyer.

Let these considerations, Timothy, induce you to maintain a strict and habitual government over yourself, that you may not upon any occasion be thrown off your guard, or by inadvertence or imprudence discredit your profession and injure your usefulness. Let not your character be in the least degree assimilated to that of these false teachers. And keep a vigilant eye upon the churches intrusted to your care. Oppose to the utmost of your power the first symptoms of that evil spirit which I have described. You will meet with much opposition from the enemies of truth; you will be calumniated, insulted, and persecuted by those who, to answer their own sinister purposes, would debase and corrupt the gospel. Regard it not. Arm yourself with fortitude and Christian magnanimity. Be not dismayed. Resolve at all hazards to perform the whole, and every part of your duty, as a minister of the gospel, as an associate, and an authorized successor of the apostles. Shrink not from your appointed share, whether of labours or of sufferings; and aim at nothing but the complete discharge of the various and arduous duties of the province which has been assigned you, whatever be the consequence. Ch. IV. Ver. 5.

3. The apostle is the more earnest in his exhortation, from a conviction that his own season of service is drawing to a close: and he takes occasion to express to the evangelist the high satisfaction which he feels in the review of his conduct, and his triumphant expectation of a future reward, ver. 6—8.

Ch. IV. Ver. 6. *For the libation is already poured out upon my head*[1], *and the time of my departure is near.*

I am the more earnest, my dear friend, in these exhortations to diligence and fidelity, as I am very apprehensive that my season of service is drawing rapidly to a conclusion, when I shall no longer be able to assist you either by my advice or my example. My time of life, and my situation as a prisoner waiting for the judgement of the emperor, lead me to expect that my residence here will be but of short duration. I see the preparations made to offer me up. The libation is already poured upon the victim's head. I stand before the altar: and in a few short months, or perhaps weeks, the sacrifice will

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[1] *For the libation,* &c.] ηδη σπενδομαι. "For the libation is already poured out upon my devoted head." Harwood; who observes, that "it is a sacrifical term; that the apostle alludes to the libation that was poured on the victim before it was sacrificed." "Σπενδω, *propriè* libo: *vinum effundo victimæ in honorem Dei. Metaphoricè,* paulatim absumor, 2 Tim. iv. 6. *Jam enim, omnes vires meæ sensim minuuntur et absumuntur.*" Schleusner. "*Jam nunc aspergor vino: præparor ad mortem, ut victimæ solent.*" Grotius. "I am now ready to be poured out." Newcome. "as a libation upon God's altar." Doddridge.

Mr. Wakefield's translation in his first edition was: "I am now pouring out my libation: *q. d.* in grateful acknowledgement to God for my victory." The apostle represents himself as a conqueror at the games, who, having received his award, was offering his sacrifice, and preparing to depart. A very beautiful and interesting image. But the learned author, upon recollection probably conceiving that the original would not well bear that interpretation, altered his translation in his second edition to, *I am pouring out myself as a libation.* I follow the interpretation of Grotius and Harwood, who take the verb in a passive sense, and understand the apostle as describing himself as a victim standing before the altar, upon which the libation has been poured, and which is just ready for the knife.

be complete. The fatal blow will be struck; and I shall bid adieu to this scene of warfare and suffering. But think not that I look forward to that awful hour with feelings of despondency or dismay. No; Ch. IV. Ver. 6.

I have contended in a good cause, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith[2]. As to *what remaineth, a crown of righteousness is reserved for me, which the Lord, the impartial judge*[3], *will award to me in that day*[4], *and not to me only, but to all those also who love his appearance.* 7. 8.

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[2] *I have kept the faith.*] "been faithful to my engagements, by an honourable observance of all the laws of the game." Wakefield. See ii. 5. Dr. Benson denies that the expression τὴν πίστιν τετήρηκα can bear this sense, and interprets it "of faithfully discharging the duties of a high public station." "I have maintained an inviolable fidelity." Harwood.

[3] *Impartial judge.*] "impartial umpire." Wakefield. Dr. Benson says, "he here represents the great judge, who had been witness to all his behaviour, with a crown in his hand, which he will bestow upon him as the reward of his faithfulness and of his coming off victor."

[4] *In that day.*] "the great day of judgement;" "for so," says Dr. Benson, "the phrase generally signifies throughout the New Testament." "With what satisfaction," says Dr. Priestley in his note upon this text, "does the apostle here reflect upon his conduct as a preacher of the gospel! and what encouragement must this have given to Timothy, and ought to give to us to follow him in the same work of zeal and labour of love!" He adds, "I cannot help observing in this place, that the rewards which the apostle expected were, in his idea, to be conferred only at the time of the general resurrection, called, by way of eminence, *that* day, the time of the appearing of Jesus Christ, when he shall come to raise the dead and judge the world. Had he had any expectation of receiving the reward, or any part of the reward, of his labours immediately after death, he could not have been so ungrateful as to have entirely overlooked it."

There is little foundation for the remark of Dr. Doddridge

Ch. IV. Ver. 8.

Think not, Timothy, now that I am come to the close of life, and review my conduct as a preacher of the gospel, and an apostle of Christ, that I repent of my faithful adherence to my revered master, or that I regret any of the labours, or the sufferings, which I have undergone in his cause. No, my friend, I triumph in the recollection that I have successfully and perseveringly maintained, and am now concluding, an arduous but an honourable struggle with the enemies of the Christian faith; that I have now finished a glorious race which has required unintermitting vigilance, and has called forth all the energies of my soul. And I am proud to say, that I have resolutely and firmly adhered to the cause in which I was embarked, and to the principles with which I entered upon the contest; and that amidst great opposition, and many struggles, I have preserved the Christian doctrine pure and uncorrupted, and the liberties of the Gentile church inviolate. Nothing now remains but to receive the prize. Not indeed a chaplet of fading flowers, or withering

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upon this text, that "though it certainly proves that the great and most glorious reward of faithful Christians is referred to the day of general judgement, it would, nevertheless, be very precarious to argue from hence that there shall be no *prelibation* and *anticipation* of this happiness in a separate state. And when *the many texts* which have been so often urged in proof of that intermediate happiness are considered, it is surprising that any stress can be laid on the objection which can be drawn from such passages as this." It may surely be asked, where those *many* texts are to be found which speak of *prelibations* and *anticipations* of future happiness antecedently to the day of judgement.

leaves, but a diadem of everlasting glory and felicity, which my honoured Master, the impartial umpire of the course, who has been witness to my resolute and persevering efforts, will place upon my head in that day to which he has directed the hopes and expectations of his faithful servants: that awful, that delightful day, when he will himself appear to fulfill all his glorious promises, and when every honest exertion in his cause, and every sacrifice for truth and righteousness, shall meet with ample compensation, and be crowned with everlasting honour. Ch. IV. Ver. 8.

For be assured, Timothy, that this glorious prize is not limited to myself alone, or, to those who, like me, are apostles of Christ. It is held forth to you, to every faithful minister of the gospel, to every sincere and approved disciple of Jesus in every age, who by a practical adherence to the profession of the gospel, and by earnest endeavours to extend its dominion to the utmost of his power, demonstrates that he has imbibed its spirit, lives under the influence of its awful expectations, and is supremely solicitous to obtain the final approbation of his Lord and Master. May you, my friend, by bearing a willing part in his labours and sufferings, make good your title to participate with him in his final and everlasting triumph.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 8.

SECTION IX.

THE APOSTLE expresses his earnest desire to see his friend: he gives a brief account of his present situation, and concludes with a salutation, a doxology, and the apostolic benediction. Ch. iv. 9—22.

1. The apostle expresses his earnest desire to see Timothy, and the rather as many had quitted him; and he requests that the evangelist would take the charge of certain articles which he had left at Troas, ver. 9—13.

9. *Do thy utmost to come to me speedily.*

Many of my associates and fellow-labourers have, for one reason or another, quitted my company, so that I am left alone here among strangers. Your society and assistance in these circumstances will be peculiarly acceptable to me. Endeavour therefore to come to Rome as soon as you conveniently can.

10. *For Demas hath forsaken me*[1] *through love of the present world, and is gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia*[2].

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[1] *Demas,* &c.] Demas is mentioned with honour by the apostle in his epistle to Philemon, ver. 24, as his fellow-labourer in connexion with Mark and Luke; it is probable, therefore, that he soon recovered from his alarm, and returned to the apostle. See Lardner's *History of the Apostles,* vol. ii. p. 283, ed. 2.

[2] *Titus to Dalmatia.*] From the manner and connexion in

My situation here was so very perilous, that Demas, whose possessions and connexions in this world engross too great a share of his affections, took the alarm, and is gone to Thessalonica to be out of the way of danger. Crescens likewise, and even Titus, have left me: the former having returned to Asia, and the latter having crossed the sea into Dalmatia. I do not, however, doubt that they, the two latter at least, will employ themselves usefully in their respective stations, though I would rather have enjoyed their society, aid, and comfort, at Rome. Ch. IV. Ver. 10.

Luke only is with me. Take Mark and bring him with thee: for he will be useful to me as a minister. 11.

All however have not deserted me. Luke, and he alone of my Asiatic friends, is still with me: the fearless associate of my labours and my dangers, and the faithful historian of my apostolic mission. In

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which the name of this evangelist is here introduced, it is highly probable that he had made this excursion from timidity, and without the apostle's concurrence. Luke remained while the others fled, and it is not impossible that he might feel some resentment at the cowardice of his companions. This is the last we hear of Titus: it does not appear that he ever returned to the apostle, and possibly it was for this reason that his name is never once mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, which might be composed by Luke during his residence with Paul at Rome. The apostle, however, does not insinuate that either Titus or Crescens or Demas had apostatized from the faith; but he certainly gives no intimation that he had himself sent either of them upon an evangelical mission. Demas is mentioned with honour in connexion with Luke, Col. iii. 14. See also Benson on 2 Tim. iv. 10. These circumstances favour the supposition that this epistle was written at the beginning of the apostle's first imprisonment, as stated in the introduction to this epistle.

Ch. IV. Ver. 11. your way to Rome call upon Mark and bring him with you. Like Demas, he once deserted the service, being alarmed at the prospect of difficulties and perils [1]. But he has long since retrieved his character. And though I formerly declined his society, and even parted with Barnabas rather than I would accept the company of Mark, I now think very differently of him, and desire his presence and assistance as an active, faithful, and useful minister and associate.

12. *And I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus* [2].

He will set you at liberty and supply your place, so that when he arrives I hope you will set out immediately.

13. *When thou comest, bring with thee the bag* [3] *which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, but especially the parchments* [4].

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[1] *He once deserted.*] See Acts xiii. 13, xv. 38, 39.

[2] *I have sent Tychicus.*] If Tychicus went to Ephesus, and was the bearer of this epistle to Timothy, he certainly returned to Rome before the end of the apostle's imprisonment, as he was, together with Onesimus, the bearer of the epistles to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and Philemon, which were all written a short time before the apostle's release. See Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7, 9; Philem. ver. 10, 22.

[3] *The bag.*] "φελονης, *omne integumentum et involucrum alicujus rei.*" Schleusner. Probably the apostle means the cloke-bag or portmanteau which contained his books and parchments. It is hardly to be supposed that it could be an object of any importance to the apostle to send for an old cloke which he had left with his friend several years before. See Benson.

[4] *Books and parchments.*] Books were probably manuscripts written upon a less durable substance, such as bark or papyrus. Parchment was more durable, and probably contained the more valuable writings. Learned men have trifled egregiously in conjecturing what these parchments contained. See Macknight. Benson

You will pass through Troas in your way. Call at the house of Carpus, and bring with you the portmanteau and the books which I left under the care of that valuable friend some years ago. If you cannot bring all, I particularly request that you would at least bring the volumes which are written upon parchment, and which I value most. I foresee that my confinement here will probably be of some duration, and it will be convenient to have my books at hand. Ch. IV. Ver. 13.

2. The apostle warns Timothy against the wicked practices of Alexander, who was a bitter enemy to the apostle's doctrine, ver. 14, 15.

Alexander the coppersmith[5] *has done me great injury: the Lord will reward him according to his works*[6]. *Against whom be thou also upon thy guard, for he vehemently opposes our doctrine.* 14. 15.

Benson *on Epistles,* vol. ii. p. 510. Troas, on account of the narrowness of the passage by sea, appears to have been frequented as a convenient station for travellers who desired to cross from Asia into Greece. It was probably Timothy's best way to Rome as winter approached. The apostle Paul, in his way from Greece to Syria, though in haste, passed from Philippi to Troas. Acts xx.

[5] *Alexander the coppersmith.*] Probably the same man whom the Jews wished to bring forward during the tumult at Ephesus, Acts xix. 33; and the same whom the apostle had excommunicated as an apostate, 1 Tim. i. 20. He is supposed to have been a Jewish Gnostic. See Dr. Priestley on the text.

[6] *The Lord will reward him,* &c.] This is the reading of the Alexandrine, Ephrem, Clermont, and Corbey manuscripts. Griesbach marks it as of high authority; and it relieves the difficulty arising from the supposed execration of the apostle, which is expressed in the received text.

Ch. IV. Ver. 15. This man is a bitter enemy to the gospel, and especially to the doctrine which you and I think it our duty to teach and to enforce, the perfect liberty of the gentile church. By his malicious opposition he has done me all the injury he could; and though, as I mentioned to you in a former letter, I have expelled him from the communion of the Christian church, and so far diminished his influence among professed believers, he seems to be exasperated rather than reformed by this measure of needful severity. I however have proceeded against him to the utmost limits of my apostolical authority. If he persist in his malignant and injurious conduct, he must be left in the hand of God, who will inflict upon him condign punishment. In the mean time be you upon your guard against his malice and enmity, and by prudence and firmness repel every attack, and deprive him of every advantage against you.

3. The apostle informs Timothy, that though he was deserted by his timid friends at his first appearance at the imperial tribunal, nevertheless God supported and rescued him, and that he continues to place entire confidence in the divine protection, ver. 16—18.

16. *At my first defence no one was with me, but all* men *forsook me*[1]*: may it not be imputed to their charge.*

[1] *All forsook me.*] As the apostle was writing to Timothy, to whom the Roman converts were unknown, he probably alludes chiefly in this passage to the Christians who had been his

When my cause was first brought to a hearing, the Christians here, as well as those who accompanied me from Asia, were seized with a sudden panic, and would not venture to appear with me in court, but left me to plead my cause alone. Such timid conduct was hardly to be expected from men who had made so many solemn professions of attachment to my person, and of zeal for truth. But the case was perilous, and human nature is frail. Their misconduct was the effect of timidity, not of insincerity. I heartily forgive them, and I pray God to forgive them too. Ch. IV. Ver. 16.

But the Lord stood by me[2] *and gave me strength; that by me the preaching* of the gospel *might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was rescued from the lion's mouth*[3]. 17.

Though my friends deserted me, the Lord was at hand, and graciously inspired me with wisdom, courage, and eloquence, which raised me above the need of human support, and enabled me, in the presence of my accusers and my judges, to proclaim with

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companions out of Asia, and to whose firmness and friendship and zeal he no doubt principally looked for support. See Benson *ad fin.*

[2] *The Lord stood by me.*] Perhaps the apostle means his master Jesus Christ, who had originally invested him with the apostolic office, and had frequently appeared to him in the course of his ministry; and who would no doubt be with him upon this important occasion. See 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9, Acts xxii. 18. But the expression is ambiguous.

[3] *The lion's mouth.*] Mr. Wakefield understands this as a proverbial expression, and not as alluding to any individual, whether the emperor or his deputy; which, however, is the opinion of most expositors.

Ch. IV. Ver. 17. such undaunted boldness and convincing energy the truths of the gospel, as produced the most salutary impressions upon all who heard me, and contributed to the object of my apostolical mission, in making known the Christian doctrine to all classes and descriptions of men, whether of high or low degree, whether Jews or heathen. The consequence of this defence was an immediate order for a relaxation of my confinement; and my unexpected escape from a situation so critical and hazardous, is like deliverance from the very jaws of a lion.

18. *And the Lord will rescue me*[1] *from every danger*[2], *and will preserve me for his heavenly kingdom*[3]. *To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

The Lord, whom I faithfully serve, and who has hitherto been my powerful protector, will continue to protect me still: and while he has any work for me to perform, he will guard me from impending dangers, and will preserve and enable me to go through every labour which may be requisite for

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[1] *The Lord,* &c.] See the note upon verse 17. The apostle at this time was uncertain of the issue of his imprisonment. In his letters to the Philippians, Colossians, &c., written above a year afterwards, he expresses great hope of release.

[2] *From every danger.*] εργε πονηρε, evil work. See Wakefield. —"*Multi intelligunt de indigno quovis facinore, quod in se apostolus admittere posset: alii vero, de facinore quovis, quod in eum falsi fratres, aut nominis Christiani hostes machinari possent.*" Rosenmuller.

[3] *Preserve me for his heavenly kingdom.*] εις, "that he will bring me safe *to* it." Benson. Or perhaps that he will preserve me for it; for the purpose of promoting the progress of the gospel, the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of righteousness and truth and peace in this world. Εις sometimes signifies *in order to.* See Rom. i. 17, xvi. 26. See Macknight's *Introd.* Ess. 4.

the promulgation of the gospel and the establishment of his kingdom in the world. And longer than this I desire not to live: for life is of no value when usefulness is ended. But in every situation, and to the remotest period of existence, I would acknowledge the goodness and celebrate the praises of him who honoured me with the apostolical mission, and who has hitherto preserved and encouraged me in the discharge of it. Amen. Ch. IV. Ver. 18.

4. The apostle concludes the epistle with salutations and a benediction, ver. 19—22.

Salute Prisca[4] *and Aquila, and the family of Onesiphorus*[5]. 19.

Remember me affectionately to those dear and venerable friends from whom I have received so much kindness, and to whose assistance I am so much indebted.

Erastus[6] *remains at Corinth, but Trophimus I have left sick at Miletus*[7]. 20.

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[4] *Prisca.*] In the Acts called Priscilla, which is probably a diminutive of the other. Acts xviii. 2, 26. See Benson. Dr. Owen takes Priscilla to be the true name, for which Prisca is an easy contraction. Bowyer.

[5] *The family,* &c.] Onesiphorus himself might be still at Rome; or at least not returned from his journey. See 2 Tim. i. 16.

[6] *Erastus.*] He was chamberlain of Corinth, and is mentioned Acts xvi. 23, xix. 22.—The apostle perhaps had requested Erastus to meet him at Rome, expecting that the friendship and patronage of a person of his rank and consequence might be of some use to him in the imperial court.

[7] *Miletus,* &c.] Grotius conjectures it should be Μελιτη, and supposes that Trophimus was left at Melita after the shipwreck. But Miletus was also a city in Crete, mentioned by Strabo and Pliny.

Ch. IV. Ver. 20. It did not suit Erastus to accompany or to follow me to Rome, as I wished and he intended; the duties of his office constrained him to continue at Corinth. Trophimus would have been glad to have attended me throughout, and he set off with me: but he fell sick by the way, and I was obliged to leave him at Miletus.

21. *Do thy utmost to come to me before winter*[1].

I am here a prisoner and almost alone. My old friends have left me, and I have not yet formed many new connexions. I shall therefore pass a solitary and uncomfortable winter if you and Mark do not give me your company. I again therefore request that you will set off as soon as possible after the receipt of this letter, and come to me at Rome before the stormy season sets in, and navigation becomes unpleasant and dangerous.

Eubulus and Pudens, and Linus and Claudia[2], *and all the brethren*[3] *salute thee.*

Our pious friends here, some of whom are per-

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[1] *Before winter.*] "From hence," says Dr. Benson, "we may conclude that this epistle was written some time in the spring or summer."

[2] *Eubulus, Pudens,* &c.] "Pudens is said to have been of the senatorian order; and Claudia, a British lady converted by St. Paul; but without sufficient authority. Linus is said by the ancients to have been afterwards the first bishop of Rome." Benson.

[3] *All the brethren.*] "This is an intimation that there were Christian brethren still at Rome, and that the whole church was not dispersed and broken up." Benson.

"No person," says Dr. Priestley, "can read these salutations from particular persons to particular persons, without being satisfied that this is a genuine epistle, written as other epistles of that age were. The circumstances of the cloke and other minute particulars, give us, however, no idea of his wri-

sons of distinction, who have heard of your character and zeal, and who entertain a high respect for you, desire to be affectionately remembered to you. Ch. IV. Ver. 21.

The Lord Jesus Christ be *with thy Spirit. Favour be with you. Amen.* 22.

I conclude with the best wish I can form for you. May Jesus Christ, our great and common master, be with you, as he has been with me. May he be your instructor, protector, and comforter, as he has been mine. May he dispose and qualify you to preach his gospel with fidelity, courage, and success. And finally, may all who attend your ministry, and particularly the Christians at Ephesus, who have enjoyed the chief benefit of your evangelical ministrations, abundantly participate with you in the blessings of the everlasting gospel. Amen.

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ting from inspiration, because we cannot imagine any want of it to such a man as Paul, in writing such an epistle as this; but that such a letter should be written by him in the circumstances in which he then was, is a very important consideration in favour of the truth of Christianity, because it cannot be accounted for without supposing the truth of the leading facts in the gospel history."

N.B. The Postscript is wanting in most of the ancient manuscripts and versions, and is not of the least authority. See Griesbach. It states that the Second Epistle to Timothy ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.

THE EPISTLE

OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TITUS.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

TITUS, to whom this epistle is addressed, was a Greek (Gal. ii. 3), and was probably converted from idolatry by the apostle Paul, who calls him his genuine son in the faith (Tit. i. 4); but the time of his conversion cannot be ascertained. It is a remarkable circumstance that Luke never mentions the name of Titus in his history; though it appears from the epistle that both of them were companions of the apostle [1], and were probably associated in the same ministry.

The name of Titus first occurs in the Epistle to the Galatians [2]; where it appears that he accompa-

[1] Probably to the church at Corinth, 2 Cor. viii. 16—18.
[2] Gal. ii. 3.

nied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem A.D. 49 or 50, when they went up to consult the apostles concerning the obligation which the converted Gentiles were said to be under to submit to the Mosaic ritual; upon which occasion the apostle declares, that he would not suffer Titus to resign his Christian liberty in order to gratify the prejudices of the Jewish bigots. After this, we hear no more of him till the date of this epistle, though he was probably the occasional, if not the constant, attendant upon the apostle in his mission [1].

Luke gives no account in his history of the first promulgation of the gospel in Crete; and learned men have assigned different times for this event, according to their different hypotheses. It is a matter of little consequence. The opinion which appears to me the most probable, is that which represents the apostle as having made an excursion into Crete, in the course of the three years in which he resided principally at Ephesus. He went thither perhaps in the beginning of the year 56, or the latter end of 55, and took Titus with him; and having made a considerable number of converts, he returned to Ephesus, leaving Titus behind to settle the affairs of the church, and to establish good order and good morals among the new converts. Soon after his return he wrote this letter to Titus, to encourage and support him in those vigorous mea-

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 23. The apostle calls him his partner and fellow-labourer.

sures which it was necessary for him to adopt among a people so ignorant, vicious, and unruly. The apostle directs Titus to remain in Crete till he should be relieved by Tychicus or Artemas (ch. iii. 12), after which he desires him to come to him at Nicopolis, where he then proposed to pass the winter. But, having received a letter from the Corinthians soon after his return to Ephesus, and learning from their messengers the deplorable state of the church at Corinth, the apostle appears to have altered his plan. Deferring his intended journey to Corinth, he determined to remain at Ephesus till Pentecost (1 Cor. xvi. 5); and being solicitous to know what impression his epistle had made upon the Corinthians, he sent Artemas to relieve Titus[2], and directed that evangelist to go immediately to Corinth, and to meet him at Troas in the summer of A.D. 56 (2 Cor. ii. 12). Not finding Titus at Troas, he went forward to Macedonia, where it appears that he met this evangelist, who gave him an account upon the whole agreeable, though not altogether satisfactory, of the state of the Corinthian church. The apostle, having received this information, resolved to postpone his visit to Corinth for a year, and in the mean time he went probably into Dalmatia and Illyricum to preach the gospel, and took Titus with him. Upon his return to Mace-

[2] Acts xx. 4. Tychicus went with Paul to Asia; probably, therefore, not Tychicus, but Artemas, had been sent to Crete to relieve Titus.

donia, the apostle sent that evangelist, together with Luke, and another eminent person, to carry his second epistle to the Corinthians, and to hasten their collection for the benefit of the Hebrew Christians; recommending Titus to them as his partner and fellow-helper (ch. viii. 23). Soon afterwards the apostle came to Corinth himself [1]. The last mention which is made of Titus is 2 Tim. iv. 10; from which it appears that he had been with the apostle during his imprisonment at Rome, and that he went from him to Dalmatia, which Dr. Lardner regards as a presumptive argument that he had visited that country before. But whether Titus went upon this occasion with, or, without the approbation of the apostle, does not appear; probably the latter, as the apostle complains of being deserted by every body but Luke. And this, perhaps, might be the reason why Luke, taking offence at Titus on account of his abandonment of the apostle in the season of danger, might purposely leave out his name in his history of the apostolic missions.

The design of the epistle is, to direct the evangelist to the choice of persons properly qualified to superintend the Christian churches, and to animate and support him in those vigorous measures which might be necessary to the preservation of order and discipline among the new converts from an unruly

[1] See Lardner's *Hist. of Apostles*, &c., ch. xii. § 6; Benson's and Doddridge's Prefaces to the Epistle to Titus.

people; and likewise to explain those relative and personal virtues upon which it would be necessary for the evangelist to insist, as indispensable requisites to the Christian character. It has been observed, that there is a remarkable resemblance between this epistle and the First Epistle to Timothy[2], which was no doubt written nearly at the same time, and upon a similar occasion, but that the apostle is more concise in his exhortation to Titus, who was probably a man of considerable

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[2] Archdeacon Paley, in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, has noticed the visible affinity between the Epistle to Titus and the First Epistle to Timothy, as a presumption in favour of the genuineness of both. He particularly mentions, that the writer accosts his two friends with the same salutations, and passes on to the business of his Letter with the same transition: 1 Tim. i. 2, 3, Titus i. 4, 5;—that the advice to both evangelists is similar, 1 Tim. i. 4, Titus iii. 9, 1 Tim. iv. 12, Titus ii. 15;—that the phrase "this is a faithful saying," occurs three times in the first epistle to Timothy, once in the second, and once in this, and in no other part of Paul's writings;—that the word *sound*, as applied to words or doctrine, is used twice in the first epistle to Timothy, twice in the second, and three times in the epistle to Titus, and no where else in the New Testament; and that the phrase *God our Saviour* is found only in these epistles. Also, that similar terms are employed in the epistle to Titus, and the first to Timothy, in describing the qualifications required in those who should be advanced to stations of authority in the church.

Hence the learned writer concludes, that the two epistles were written nearly at the same time, and both of them in the interval between the apostle's first and second imprisonment. The former supposition is indeed highly probable; but it is an insurmountable objection against the latter, that the preaching of the gospel in Crete should have been delayed to so late a period. A more probable date has, I think, been assigned to both the epistles; but of this the reader will judge. Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. xiii.

ability, and of greater age and experience than Timothy.

In the prosecution of his purpose, FIRST, The apostle, in the INTRODUCTION to the epistle, solemnly announces himself as the authorized teacher of that doctrine of life which, having been promised in past ages, had by Jesus Christ been explicitly revealed; and expresses his devout wishes for the happiness of his convert and his friend. Ch. i. 1—4.

SECONDLY. The apostle assigns his special reason for leaving Titus in Crete: namely, to appoint superintendants over the churches; which leads him to insist upon the qualifications necessary to the honourable and successful discharge of the episcopal or pastoral office. And he further takes notice of the peculiar difficulty which would attend the discharge of this office in Crete, arising from the profligate character of the Cretans themselves; which fully corresponded with the description given of them by one of their own poets, and which required uncommon vigilance, prudence, and fortitude, in those who were to be their instructors in the faith, the advocates of pure religion, and the guardians of Christian morals, ver. 5—16.

THIRDLY. The apostle directs the evangelist to enforce upon the aged and the young of both sexes, an habitual regard to the duties appropriate to their respective ages and characters. Ch. ii. 1—8.

FOURTHLY. He directs Titus to exhort slaves to

obedience, meekness, and fidelity, upon evangelical principles. These exhortations he enforces by the consideration, that the design of the gospel is to redeem men of all ranks from the dominion of ignorance and vice, and to introduce all equally into a state of privilege and hope, ver. 9—15.

Fifthly. He exhorts subjects to obey their civil rulers, and to live in peace, and notices the great and beneficial change which a thorough conversion to the Christian religion introduces into the social state, and the unspeakable goodness of God in calling the Gentiles to the hope of life by Jesus Christ. Ch. iii. ver. 1—7.

Sixthly. The apostle directs professing Christians to follow useful and reputable occupations, and to avoid trifling disputes: he advises Titus to expel from the Christian community men of a contentious and contumacious spirit; and concludes the epistle with a charge to Titus to come to him at Nicopolis; commending to his notice Zenas and Apollos[1]; repeating his exhortation to recommend industry to those who professed the Christian faith; and adding, finally, his salutations and benediction, ver. 8—15.

The epistle is said, in the Postscript, to have been

[1] Apollos was certainly with the apostle at Ephesus when he wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians; and as he declined going to Corinth, he might perhaps make a visit to Crete. 1 Cor. xvi. 12.

written from Nicopolis[1]; but it is more probable that it was written from Ephesus in the spring of A.D. 56.[2]

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[1] There were several cities of that name; one in Thrace, which is the city supposed by Theodoret and Chrysostom to have been intended by the apostle: in this opinion they are joined by Lardner. Jerom understood it of Nicopolis in Epirus, which took its name from the victory at Actium. Paley agrees with Jerom.

[2] Dr. Lardner places the date of this epistle A.D. 56, after the apostle left Ephesus. I follow Dr. Ashworth, who supposed it to have been written in the same year, *before* he left Ephesus. Dr. Doddridge thought it was written between the first and second imprisonment at Rome: Mill places it in 64, Pearson in 65. Lardner thinks it not probable that Crete should have remained so long without the knowledge of the gospel.

THE

EPISTLE TO TITUS.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

1. THE apostle announces himself as the authorized teacher of that doctrine of life, which having, under the former dispensation, been the subject of promise, is now explicitly revealed by Jesus Christ, and expresses his devout wishes for the happiness of his convert and friend. Ch. i. 1—4. Ch. I.

PAUL, a servant[1] *of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for* promoting[2] *the faith of the chosen* Ver. 1.

[1] *A servant.*] δουλος, *a slave.* "This is the only epistle of Paul in which he begins with calling himself a servant of God: 1 Pet. ii. 16. The apostle might allude to the case of the Hebrew slave, who, when he might have had his liberty in the seventh year, declared he loved his master and would not be released, but obliged himself to be a servant for life." Benson.

[2] *For* promoting.] κατα πιστιν, according to the faith. κατα ευσεβειαν, according to godliness; *i. e.* which promotes faith and godliness. Vide Doddridge, Worsley, Raphelius. "Not *according to*, but for *promoting of:* place ver. 2, 3, in a paren-

Ch. I. Ver. 2. *of God, and the acknowledgement*[1] *of the truth which promoteth godliness, (concerning the hope of everlasting life, which God, who cannot falsify, pro-*
3. *mised before the ancient dispensations*[2], *but which promise*[3] *he hath in its own times*[4] *manifested by the preaching which hath been committed to me according to the appointment of God our Saviour,)*
4. *to Titus,* my *genuine son*[5], *in the common faith*[6], *favour and peace*[7] *from God* our *father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*[8] *our Saviour.*

The apostle, intending to give directions to Titus

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thesis." Owen *ap.* Bowyer.—Griesbach begins the parenthesis at κατα.

[1] *Acknowledgement.*] επιγνωσιν, "agnitio, *verius quam* cognitio." Erasmus.—*To acknowledge* is a stronger expression than *knowledge* (γνωσις): it signifies not only to *know*, but to admit and embrace it. 2 Cor. i. 13, 14. See Benson.

[2] *Before the ancient dispensations.*] So Newcome. "χρονων αιωνιων, before the *secular ages*." Benson. *i. e.* before the times or jubilees under the law: vide Benson's note.

[3] *But which promise.*] "but hath manifested his word." Newcome. λογον, "promise." Wakefield, Macknight.

[4] *Its own times.*] καιροις ιδιοις, in his own proper time. "Perhaps he alludes to prophecies, particularly Daniel's seventy weeks." Benson. "in due time." Newcome. So Castalio, Beza. "in its season." Wakefield.

[5] *Genuine son.*] γνησιῳ· *i. e.* one who holds the Christian doctrine in the purity in which it was taught by the apostle. "my own son." Newcome. "my true son." Wakefield.

[6] *Common faith.*] κοινην, faith common to Jews and Gentiles. This phrase is not used to Timothy, but to Titus a Gentile Christian, and therefore particularly proper and beautiful. See Benson.

[7] *Favour and peace.*] ελεος, *mercy*, is wanting in the best copies. Vide Benson, Mill, Griesbach.

[8] *Lord Jesus Christ.*] Κυριε, *Lord*, is wanting in the Alexandrine MS., and in the Coptic and Vulgate versions. Vide Benson and Griesbach.

concerning a proper choice of persons to superintend the affairs of Christian societies, and to preach the gospel in Crete, very properly introduces this advice, by announcing his own official and sacred character, and giving a brief and comprehensive summary of the doctrine he taught. Ch. I. Ver. 4.

He first professes himself to be the servant of God, his property, his redeemed, devoted, willing *slave;* subject to his unlimited and uncontrouled authority, and acknowledging no other rule of conduct than his will and pleasure.

Of Jesus Christ he declares himself to be an *apostle,* appointed to that high and honourable office by Jesus Christ himself; who, after his resurrection, had appeared to him for that purpose, and had given him a charge to preach the gospel to the heathen.

The design of his mission was, to *promote the faith of the chosen of God;* it was to establish the faith of those who already believed, and who, publicly professing the Christian doctrine, had been admitted into the society of those who are described as having been chosen by God out of the idolatrous and unbelieving world, to enjoy the privileges and hopes of the gospel.

But the apostle's mission further extended to the instruction of those who were not yet enlightened, who having been chosen were by him to be invited to the belief and profession of the gospel. He taught the gospel alike to the idolatrous heathen, and to the prejudiced Jews; and he taught it not as

Ch. I. Ver. 4.

a matter of speculation, but as a great energetic practical principle of virtue and piety.

And the doctrine which the apostle taught related chiefly to that *hope of everlasting life, which God, who could not falsify, had promised.* Christianity produces its effect upon the hearts and lives of men, by revealing the unspeakably important doctrine of an everlasting state of righteous retribution. This it is which distinguishes the gospel from every other system of philosophy and moral instruction. It places the expectation of a life to come, upon the promise of a faithful and unchangeable God; and it is by the hopes and fears of a future life thus authoritatively confirmed, that the Christian religion produces its beneficial effects upon the heart, and makes men wiser and better.

This promise was made *antecedently to the ancient dispensations.* The expression is somewhat obscure. It signifies literally, *before eternal times.* Hence some have dreamed of what they call an eternal covenant of redemption; that is, of some mysterious transaction between the Father and the Son for the salvation of men, from all eternity, before time began. Others, with better appearance of reason, have understood the phrase of the promise which God made to Adam after the Fall, previously to the patriarchal or the Mosaic dispensations. The more probable interpretation is, that the apostle alludes to the promise which was made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the ancient patriarchs, before the giving out of the law upon Mount Sinai.

It may be rendered, " the times of the ages." And it is well known, that age is often put for dispensation, and the plural sometimes for the singular. And the apostle, in most of his epistles, appeals to the promise of God to Abraham, that in him should all families of the earth be blessed, Gen. xii. 3, as a summary and promise of the gospel antecedently to the promulgation of the law. Most probably, therefore, he alludes to the same promise here. Ch. I. Ver. 4.

It was then obscurely insinuated; it is now explicitly revealed. God, in his own time, under the gospel dispensation, which was promulgated at that time, which, to his unerring wisdom, appeared most expedient, has published to all mankind the promise, which was before known to few, and has authorized his holy servant and apostle to proclaim the glad tidings to all mankind without distinction; thus approving himself to be the faithful God, the Saviour, the deliverer of the Jew from the bondage of the law, and of the heathen from the yoke of idolatry and vice, and introducing all into a state of liberty, of reconciliation and of hope.

The apostle, invested with the high commission to proclaim these joyful tidings, addresses himself in the beginning of this epistle, to Titus, his *genuine son in the faith*, whom he had converted from error to truth, from immorality to virtue, from the worship of idols to the knowledge of the living and the true God; and who approved himself the genuine disciple of the apostle, by adhering stedfastly to the doctrine which he had received from him,

Ch. 1. Ver. 4. neither blending it with heathen philosophy, nor corrupting it with Jewish superstition. He addresses Titus as his genuine son in the *common faith*, in that faith which was intended for the benefit of the Gentile as well as the Jew; in that gospel which promised eternal life to all of every nation who received its doctrines, and who yielded a practical subjection to its authority; and to this beloved son, as the best expression of his affectionate and paternal regard, he wishes grace and peace, in the continued possession of his interest in the gospel, of that gift which originated in infinite mercy, and which is productive of unspeakable peace and satisfaction of mind; a blessing which we derive from God, who acknowledges the endearing relation of a father to the Christian family, who are thus raised to partake of the adoption and inheritance of sons; and from the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we acknowledge as our master, and who was commissioned by his heavenly father to save us from vice and ruin, and to raise us to knowledge, to virtue, and to immortality.

SECTION II.

The apostle gives Titus some directions concerning the election of proper persons to superintend the churches of Crete, an office which the notorious vices of the Cretans made it necessary to fill with persons of the greatest prudence and respectability of character. Ch. i. ver. 5—16. Ch. I.

1. The apostle describes the qualifications of the man who was worthy of being selected for the episcopal office, ver. 5—9.

For this purpose I left thee in Crete, that thou mightest proceed to set right[1] *what was left undone*[2]*, and mightest appoint*[3] *elders in every city as I gave thee in charge.* Ver. 5.

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[1] *Proceed to set right.*] So Wakefield. "*pergas corrigere.*" Erasmus. See Macknight.—"Ut reliqua pergas ordinare. To επι *in compositione significat interdum post alium venire, et in opere ejus immutare quid, aut ei supplementum addere.*" Rosenmuller.

[2] *To set right what was left undone.*] So Wakefield. "set right the things that are wanted." Newcome. Dr. Priestley observes: "It is evident that elders and bishops were the same persons, for in one verse they are called elders and in the next verse bishops; and as every city or town, for there were no great cities in the island, had bishops, it is evident that they could not be diocesan bishops having ministers of other churches subordinate to them."

[3] *Appoint.*] The apostle gives no hint that the concurrence of the members of the society would be necessary to give validity to the appointment of Titus. Probably the Cretans were

Ch. I. Ver. 5. My numerous engagements making it necessary for me to return to Ephesus before I had organized the many converts to Christianity in the different towns of Crete into regular societies, and appointed the proper superintendants, being well satisfied with regard to your prudence, activity, knowledge and zeal, I left you behind, Titus, my beloved associate, to finish this important work; and I now renew the charge which I gave you at my departure, that you will immediately proceed to select the most prudent and respectable characters in each society to superintend its spiritual concerns.

6. *If any one be irreproachable, the husband of one wife*[1], *having children who are believers, not accused of dissoluteness, nor disobedient*[2].

One of the first qualifications of a man who is selected to superintend the church is, that he be unblameable in the management of his own family; one who has no more than one wife, who is neither a polygamist, nor divorced from his first wife without sufficient reason, and married to another. If he have children, it must appear that he has brought

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too ignorant and too imperfectly reclaimed from their vices, and likewise too much under the influence of judaizing zealots, to be capable of making a proper choice for themselves.

[1] *Of one wife*:] i. e. of one wife at a time. The apostle did not mean to condemn second marriages, much less to prohibit marriage altogether to the priesthood. Whitby appeals to the authority of Chrysostom, Œcumenius, and Jerom.

[2] *Disobedient.*] Dr. Priestley observes, that "Christianity did not act as a charm, or suddenly, but gradually, there being in the first place a change of belief, or speculative principles only, and these producing in time a change of conduct."

them up in the knowledge of truth and the practice of virtue. The children of a Christian bishop must not be idolatrous heathen, they must not lie under the reproach of dissipation and riot, they must not be undutiful to their parents. For how shall he be able to govern the church, who cannot support discipline in his own house?

Ch. I. Ver. 6.

For the bishop[3] *must be irreproachable, as the steward of God.* 7.

The man whom you appoint to be the overseer of the church, to instruct the ignorant, to confirm the wavering, to administer Christian ordinances, to lead the devotions of his fellow-worshipers, and to support discipline in the new-formed church, by whatever name he is called, whether elder or bishop, whether there be one only, or whether two or more are united in the same important charge, must be a person of unblemished morals, both in his personal and relative capacity; for he is the steward of God, appointed to dispense the truths of the gospel, and the riches of divine mercy by Jesus Christ: the dignity of his character therefore must correspond with that of his office.

Not self-willed[4], *not prone to anger*[5], *not one*

[3] *For the bishop.*] "this overseer of the church." Wakefield. Compare ver. 5. From hence it is clear, that in the apostolic age an elder and a bishop were synonymous terms. Compare Acts xx. Whitby admits that the names were then common; which he states as the opinion of Chrysostom, Theodoret, and others.

[4] *Not self-willed.*] αυθαδη, "obstinate, morose, and arrogant." Doddridge; who observes, that "Raphelius, in his Notes from Herodotus, has taken great pains to show that this is the

Ch. I. Ver. 7. *who sits long over wine, no striker, not greedy of dishonourable gain.*

The man who undertakes the superintendence of the church must not be one who insists upon having his own way in every thing, who will never yield either his inclination or his opinion to those of others, obstinate in his purpose, morose in his manners, and haughty in his demeanour; he must not take fire upon every slight provocation, and resent every supposed affront; he must not be addicted to drinking, unwilling to leave his wine, valuing himself upon his taste and judgement in intoxicating liquors, or upon the quantity which he can swallow; he must be no brawler, but must keep at the utmost distance from that quarrelling and fighting which is the general and almost inevitable consequence of hard drinking. And finally, he must be perfectly clear from that low vice, the love of mean and dishonourable gain, to which the Cretans are so much addicted, that there is no baseness to which they will not submit if they can get any thing by it.

8. *But a friend to hospitality*[1], *a lover of good-*

proper signification of the word."—"*Sibi placens, in cujus gestu, sermone, vultu, quid tumidum et præfractum apparet, quod est indicium animi plus æquo placentis sibi.*" Rosenmuller.

[5] *Not prone to anger.*] So Macknight. "not passionate." Wakefield. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 26.

[1] *A friend to hospitality.*] This was a necessary virtue where there were no public accommodations for strangers as in modern times. "Not in the modern sense of hospitality," says Whitby: "that is, a great table for persons of quality to come to."

ness[2], *self-governed*[3], *just, holy, temperate; holding fast the true doctrine*[4] *as he hath been taught, that he may be able*[5] *both to encourage by wholesome instruction, and to confute those who contradict.* Ch. I. Ver. 9.

On the contrary, the man who deserves to be selected by you to this honourable office must be attentive to strangers, and willing to receive and to entertain them according to his ability; he must delight in acts of kindness, in the society of the wise and good, loving goodness wherever he finds it; he must subdue all the inferior powers into unresisting subjection to the laws of reason and virtue; he must be correct in all his transactions with others; must maintain a sanctity of character, as becomes a member of the Christian community, and be moderate in the enjoyment of innocent gratifications. And finally, he must adhere strenuously

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[2] *A lover of goodness.*] So Wakefield. "a lover of good men." Newcome.

[3] *Self-governed.*] So Newcome. σωφρονα, "chaste." Wakefield. "prudent." Macknight and Benson. Macknight observes, "It consists in the government of the angry passions: differing from εγκρατη, which signifies one who bridles his appetites."

[4] *Holding fast.*] Αντεχομενον "signifies holding fast, in opposition to one who would wrest it from him." Macknight.—πιστε λογε, "true doctrine." Wakefield, Macknight, Newcome. Benson paraphrases it, "one who is tenacious of the Christian revelation as I taught it among them."

[5] *That he may be able.*] "that he may be able to encourage some by wholesome instruction, and to confute others who contradict." Wakefield. Compare this description of the qualifications of an elder or bishop with that given by the apostle to Timothy, 1 Tim. iii. 1—7.

Ch. I. Ver. 9. to the word of truth, the genuine doctrine of the gospel which I first taught, and which you continue to preach, without corrupting it by any foreign mixture, either from the Jewish or the heathen schools. And thus he will be qualified to administer instruction and consolation to those who are upright in their profession, which will promote their moral health and vigour; and to confute the ignorance and bigotry of others who would oppose and adulterate the gospel.

2. It was necessary to be careful in the selection of proper persons to act as elders or bishops in the churches of Crete, on account of the profligate characters of the Cretans themselves, and the perverse zeal of the judaizing teachers, ver. 10—16.

10. *For many are unruly*[1], *vain talkers*[2], *and deceiv-*
11. *ers, especially those of the circumcision*[3]. *Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole families*[4], *teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonourable gain.*

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[1] *Unruly.*] ανυποτακτοι, "very unmanageable persons." Benson.

[2] *Vain talkers.*] "persons who utter a multitude of foolish and trifling things on the subjects whereof they speak." Macknight.

[3] *Those of the circumcision.*] This seems to imply that the gospel had been preached some time in Crete to give the Judaizers an opportunity of making proselytes. Perhaps the apostle means unconverted Jews; who we know would from the beginning be very active in their opposition to the gospel.

[4] *Whole families.*] "It appears from hence," says Dr. Benson, "that some whole families of Gentile Christians had gone off and joined the Judaizers." *Subvert:* "a metaphor taken

It is the more necessary to appoint men of great respectability of character to be the teachers and pastors of the churches, because there are many who are taking great pains to corrupt the gospel of Christ, and to seduce the unwary from the path of pure Christianity. There are many who will not submit themselves readily either to your authority, Titus, or to mine; who are filling the minds of those who listen to them with crude and mischievous notions; who endeavour to pervert the understandings of their hearers. Some of them are heathen philosophers, but I principally allude to Jewish zealots, who wish to combine the bondage of the law with the liberty of the gospel. You must appoint teachers, whose reputation and whose doctrine will bear down the absurdity of these bigots, who, if they are left to themselves, will undermine the principles of the new converts, and seduce whole families to their pernicious principles. And I can assure you that these fanatical teachers, notwithstanding all their pretended zeal, have no other motives, but to make a trade of their profession, and to enrich themselves at the expense of their hearers.

Ch. I. Ver. 11.

One of themselves, a teacher[5] *of their own, hath* 12.

from those who overturn houses by sapping the foundation." Macknight.

[5] *A teacher.*] προφητης. So Wakefield.—"a poet." Newcome; who observes, "they are called *prophets* from their pretensions to inspiration." "The person here referred to is generally supposed to be Epimenides; and if so, the propriety of the epithet προφητης rather than ποιητης may easily be disco-

Ch. I. Ver. 12. *said, The Cretans have ever been liars*[1], *mischievous brutes, greedy gluttons*[2].

This character is given of them by their own poet: "The Cretans are a lying, savage, intemperate, brutal people;" and you know that this is the opinion universally entertained of them.

13. *This testimony is true; for which cause, rebuke them sharply*[3], *that they may be sound in the faith,*

14. *not attending to Jewish fables, and to the commandments of men*[4] *who apostatize*[5] *from the truth.*

I cannot but admit the truth of this description of the Cretans by their national poet. You plainly perceive, therefore, what sort of men you have to deal with, so that you must speak out boldly; it

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vered from Diog. Laertius in *Vit. Epimenidis.*" Dr. Owen *apud* Bowyer.

[1] *Ever been liars.*] "They had the reputation of liars, from their saying what was true, viz. that Jupiter, who was worshiped in Greece, was born and died among them, and from their showing his sepulchre." Priestley; who remarks that "this letter was a private one, not to be communicated to the persons whose characters are thus described; and consequently that it was not designed for the use of posterity, though in the course of divine providence it has been happily preserved to us." See Benson, and Warburton *apud* Benson. "Polybius," says Dr. Owen, "often mentions the Cretans, but scarcely ever without reproach." Bowyer.

[2] *Greedy gluttons.*] γαστερες αργαι. "greedy bellies." Wakefield. *Swift gluttons:* "i. e. insatiable devouring gluttons." Benson, from Dr. Jeremiah Hunt. "*slow*, that is, idle indolent gluttons." Newcome.

[3] *Sharply.*] αποτομως, *cut them to the quick*, that the sound and healthy part be kept from infection. See Benson.

[4] *Commandments of men:*] whether relating to holy times, or o distinctions of food, &c. Compare Rom. xvi. See Newcome.

[5] *Who apostatize.*] "who turn themselves from the truth." Wakefield.

will not do to temporize, and flatter and countenance them in their criminal practices. You must tell them plainly that Christianity positively requires the entire renunciation of all these odious vices, and the habitual, uniform practice of virtue; and that no positive rites, not even such as have been appointed by God himself, and much less Jewish traditional precepts and Pharisaic ceremonies, will be of the least avail to their acceptance with God, without sincere and deep repentance. Thus, by probing their vices to the quick, and cutting out the gangrene, you will introduce sound principle and a healthy state of mind; and will teach them to treat these mercenary apostates, together with their idle tales, and their unauthorized impositions, with the contempt they deserve. Ch. I. Ver. 14.

To the pure all things are *pure; but to the polluted, and the unfaithful*[6], *nothing* is *pure; but even their understanding and conscience are polluted.* 15.

To the enlightened and practical believer all days are equally holy, and all kinds of food are equally lawful and innocent; but to him who corrupts the faith, and who, from secular motives, introduces Jewish rites into the Christian system, all things are impure; every day is unholy, every action is criminal; his intentions are evil, his motives are base, his affections are depraved, and his whole character and conduct is offensive in the sight of God.

[6] *Unfaithful.*] So Benson; who observes, "that they appear to have known and believed right, but to have acted wrong."

Ch. I. Ver. 16. *They profess to know God, but in* their *actions they deny* him; *they are odious and untractable*[1], *and approve themselves by no one good work.*

These false teachers, who would mix Judaism with Christianity, make a great parade of their being the true worshipers of God, and represent themselves as the only persons authorized to teach religious truth; but their conduct gives the lie to their profession. In practice they are atheists, and by the indulgence they allow to their vicious propensities, they plainly show that their profession is insincere; for their vices are odious, their conduct insolent and ungovernable, and with all their pompous profession of superior knowledge of the gospel, they have not a single good quality to atone for the long and black catalogue of their crimes.

SECTION III.

Ch. II. *THE APOSTLE directs the Evangelist to enforce upon the aged and the young of both sexes the duties of their respective stations and characters, and to be himself an example of Christian virtue.* Ch. ii. 1—8.

1. He tells him what advice to give to men advanced in life, ver. 1, 2.

[1] *They are odious and untractable.*] So Wakefield. "βδελυκτοι, digni quos omnes exsecrentur, *exosi Deo et hominibus.* αδοκιμοι, *inutiles sicut nummi qui rejiciuntur.*" Rosenmuller.—worthless.

But speak thou the things *which become whole-* Ch. II. Ver. 1.
some doctrine[2].

Having stated the qualifications and duties of bishops and pastors, allow me now to address a few words of exhortation, Titus, to yourself. And first of all, pay no regard to those airs of superiority which the false teachers affect, and by no means imitate them in representing rites and ceremonies as substitutes for moral duties; but teach that doctrine which alone is truly healthful to the mind, however unpalatable to the impostor and the hypocrite; enforce the truth, that there is no salvation without sincere repentance and the practice of substantial virtue and piety, and that every one must faithfully perform the duties of his station.

That the elderly men[3] *be sober, grave, self-* 2.
governed, sound in faith, in love, in patience.

Admonish those men who are advanced in life, especially such as may be appointed to offices in the church, to keep themselves at all times perfectly

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[2] *Wholesome doctrine.*] ὑγιαινουσῃ. "True doctrine is called *wholesome*, because it invigorates the faculties of the soul, and keeps them in a healthy state." Macknight. Dr. Benson observes, that in this chapter the apostle shows Titus what he himself was to teach, as he had shown him in the preceding what the bishops should teach.

[3] *Elderly men.*] Πρεσβυτας is here understood to signify the deacons or other officers of the church, by Hammond, Le Clerc, and some of the ancients. Macknight would translate it *elders*; and observes, that the advice given to them is the same as that given to elders and deacons. 1 Tim. iii. 2, 8. Dr. Benson remarks, that "Titus is not directed to treat the old men as *fathers*, &c. He was now older than Timothy was when St. Paul wrote his first epistle to him, and might therefore be supposed capable of acting with more prudence and authority."

Ch. II. Ver. 2.

sober, never to indulge in any excess; also to be vigilant and attentive to the duties of their office; to maintain a grave and dignified deportment, and not to allow themselves in levities which in youth might perhaps be pardonable. Let them govern their tempers and their appetites, and keep them in due subjection to the dictates of reason and the law of God. Let their faith be not merely speculative, much less corrupt, but pure, vigorous, operative and salutary. Let their love be not pretended, but sincere; not partial, but universal. Let them love God with their whole heart, and their neighbours as themselves; and let them bear, with dignified composure, the infirmities and sorrows of declining years; and not, by peevishness and fruitless complaints, increase their sufferings, lessen their character, and occasion additional trouble to those whose office it is to attend their persons, to administer to their wants, and to relieve their infirmities.

2. The aged women are to be admonished to perform their duty, and particularly to instruct the younger persons of their own sex, ver. 3—5.

3. *That the elderly women*[1] *likewise* be *in behaviour*[2] *as becometh holy persons*[3], *not slanderers,*

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[1] *Elderly.*] So Wakefield. It is supposed that the apostle here alludes to deaconesses: an office known to exist in the primitive church. Rom. xvi. 1.

[2] *In behaviour.*] καταστηματι it extends to dress and personal appearance in general.—"*In habitu cultuque corporis qui Christianos decet.*" Schleusner. "*Vox κατ. latius hic sumitur:*

not addicted to excess of wine[4], *teachers of that which is right.* Ch. II. Ver. 3.

Admonish women advanced in life, and especially those who are appointed to offices of importance in the church, with regard to their own sex, to dress with propriety, and to regulate their general behaviour by the principles of the Christian religion, which prohibits its professors from conforming in an excessive degree to the follies and fashions of the world, especially when the time of life and dignity of station may be expected to elevate the mind to better things. Let them be tender of the characters of others, remembering how difficult it is to recover a lost reputation; let them not, therefore, wantonly or maliciously circulate, much less invent, reports to the prejudice of their neighbours. Let them also, above all things, abstain from drunkenness, a vice odious and contemptible in all, particularly in the female sex, and most of all in those who are advanced in life, and who sustain offices which require the greatest decorum and propriety of behaviour. And let them fulfill the duties of their years, and of their office, in instructing young persons of their own sex how to conduct themselves in a decent, honourable, and Christian manner.

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nec amictum tantum, sed et gestum, incessum, vultum, &c. complectitur." Rosenmuller.

[3] *Holy persons.*] "sacred persons, because employed in sacred offices." Macknight. Compare 1 Tim. iii. 11.

[4] *Not addicted.*] Gr. *enslaved.* Newcome.—"*Non temere præcipiendum hoc ait ætatis provectioris feminis.* Χαιρει τῳ οινῳ ἡ ἡλικια αυτη. *Schol. Vet. Hom.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. II. Ver. 4. 5. *That they may form the minds*[1] *of the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, well employed at home*[2], *submissive to their husbands, that the doctrine of God be not evil spoken of*[3].

Let elderly women, and especially those matrons who are appointed, in consequence of superior years and experience, to superintend and instruct the younger persons of their own sex, instruct and admonish the young married women to be kind and affectionate to their husbands, whether Christians or heathen; to love their children, and to manifest their maternal affection by contributing cheerfully to their support, and especially by instilling into their tender minds the principles of virtue and genuine Christianity, to command their passions, and, even under great provocation, to be meek and gentle; to abhor every thing that is inconsistent with the most delicate sentiments of honour and virtue; to live much at home, and in the prudent faithful

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[1] *Form the minds.*] σωφρονιζωσι. See Newcome's margin. "that they may *instruct*." "persuade." Macknight. "σωφ. *facere ut quis sapiat, hortari, docere.*" Rosenmuller.—"*ut prudentiam doceant adolescentulas.*" Vulgate.

[2] *Well employed at home.*] οικουργους. So the Alexandrine, Ephrem, and many of the best copies read, instead of οικους, *keepers at home*, which is the reading of the received text.—οικουργους αγαθας, "good œconomists." Worsley. "well employed:" this is the punctuation of Hen. Steph. See Bowyer. If αγαθαι is kept separate, it signifies *good, benign.*

[3] *The doctrine of God be not evil spoken of.*] "This caution is given in opposition to the error that the gospel set its professors free from human relations." Newcome. Compare 1 Tim. vi. 1.

discharge of domestic duties; and, from a regard to the will of God, to yield that subjection to their husbands which the reason of things and the custom of the country require; so that the doctrine of Christianity may not be traduced, as relaxing the duties of relative life, but may be the more approved and admired the better it is understood, as being the best source of domestic peace and union. Ch. II. Ver. 5.

3. Titus is directed what advice he is to give to young men, ver. 6.

In like manner, exhort the young men to be self-governed. 6.

Admonish the young men to lay a proper restraint upon their appetites and passions, and to maintain that strict discipline over the mind which will be productive of inward peace, and will display itself in a consistent and dignified behaviour, that will do credit to their Christian profession.

4. The apostle urges the evangelist to be himself an example of every Christian virtue, ver. 7, 8.

In all things show thyself[4] *a pattern of good works; in teaching, uncorruptness*[5]*, gravity, whole-* 7. 8.

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[4] *Show thyself.*] So Wakefield. Gr. "showing."

[5] *Uncorruptness.*] With Newcome I read αφθοριαν, which has the sanction of the most ancient copies. The received text reads αδιαφθοριαν, "*in doctrina* integritatem." Schleusner.—Mr. Wakefield conjectures that the true reading is αδιαφοριαν, *quæ sine respectu personarum se gerit, neque minus pauperi consulit quam diviti, potentique.*" *Sylva Critica*, P. i. p. 71. In thy doctrine *impartial.*

Ch. II. Ver. 8. *some doctrine, which cannot be condemned*[1], *that he who opposeth* it *may be ashamed, having no evil to say of us*[2].

If, Titus, you expect to do any good by your teaching, you must follow it up by a good example; and that not only in one or two instances, but in the habitual practice of all the virtues of the Christian character. And particularly with regard to your public instruction, do not presume to corrupt the pure word of God with any human mixtures, in order to make it more palatable to your hearers. Teach it with becoming gravity, mindful both of the Being in whose name you speak, and of the great importance of the message which you have to deliver. Let your doctrine be salutary and practical, such as will bring the mind into a healthy active state; let it be free from all unnecessary harshness and asperity of language; let it have a direct tendency to make your hearers wiser and better; and let it be so temperate and guarded that no one will dare, or be able, to find fault with it; so that the spiteful, bigoted, judaizing teachers, the enemies of the gospel, who are also your enemies and mine, may blush with shame and remorse, when they see,

[1] *Which cannot be condemned.*] "Possibly Titus, who was a Gentile convert, and who had no prejudices in favour of the Judaizers, might be in some danger of speaking with some harshness of them, and of their wicked attempts; and in the warmth of his zeal he might be led to say things which had better not have been said. Or at least the fear of such impropriety of language might lead the apostle to give him this caution." Benson.

[2] *Of us.*] All the ancient copies read ἡμων, *us*, instead of ὑμων, *you*, which is in the received text. See Griesbach.

that after all the calumnies they have propagated, they can really allege nothing truly blame-worthy against our character or our language, and that our innocence and prudence is an impenetrable shield against the venomous shafts of their inveterate malice. Ch. II. Ver. 8.

SECTION IV.

The apostle states the instructions which are to be given to servants, and the peculiar motives by which they are to be enforced, and encourages Titus to zeal and fidelity. Ch. ii. 9—15.

1. The apostle details the instructions which it would be proper to give to servants, ver. 9, 10.

Exhort[3] *bond-servants*[4] *to be submissive to* their *own*[5] *masters, to be desirous of pleasing them in all* things, *not contradicting, not secretly stealing*[6], *but showing the utmost fidelity*[7], *that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all* things. 9. 10.

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[3] Exhort.] "Supply παρακαλει from ver. 6." Newcome.

[4] *Bond-servants.*] δουλους, slaves.

[5] *Their own.*] ιδιοις, own masters: not only to Christ their common Master, but to the individuals whose slaves they are.

[6] *Secretly stealing.*] νοσφιζομενους, stealing privately through fear of detection. Compare Acts v. 3.—"not thieving." Newcome.—"not wasting or privately embezzling their masters' goods." Benson.

[7] *The utmost fidelity.*] Gr. "showing all good fidelity." So Newcome.—"the utmost faithfulness." Wakefield.

Ch. II. Ver. 10. There are some who represent the Christian religion as dissolving all civil obligations, and who teach that Christian servants and Christian slaves, upon their profession of the Christian faith, are released from obedience to their masters and immediately acquire a title to personal liberty. But though Christianity redeems men from spiritual bondage, it leaves their civil and political condition as it found it, only operating a gradual improvement by the gentle but powerful influence of moral principles. It requires, therefore, the faithful discharge of the proper duties of a servant to a master, enforcing those obligations by additional motives peculiar to itself. Let Christian slaves, therefore, be taught that they owe entire obedience to their masters in all things lawful, whether those masters be heathen or Christian, and as much after their conversion to Christianity as in their heathen state; and let them know that their subjection to Christ, our common master, by no means releases them from their antecedent duties. Let them also be taught, that they must be desirous of pleasing their masters, that they must study their tempers, their situation, and their wants, and endeavour, if possible, to anticipate their wishes; if they find any of them morose in their temper, unreasonable in their injunctions, or harsh in their language, they must bear all with meekness and gentleness; and, how grievous soever the provocation, must carefully refrain from the use of all petulant and reproachful retorting, and from all dishonest and undutiful conduct. Whenever their masters'

property is trusted to their care, they must not presume, they must not even think of secreting any part to their own use, how secure soever they may be from detection. In every concern they must act with the strictest fidelity, that they may adorn the Christian religion, that they may lead men to think well of the gospel and its professors, and thus manifest their gratitude to God, who has saved them, by the gospel of his son, from the bondage of heathenism, and has brought them into a state of liberty, hope, virtue, and happiness. Ch. II. Ver. 10.

2. It is a great motive to the performance of these duties, that the blessings of the gospel are extended to all without distinction of rank, and that the great design of it is, to render all who profess it virtuous and happy, by the awful and animating expectations which it excites, ver. 11—14.

For the favour of God, which bringeth salvation[1] *to all men, hath shone forth*[2]. 11.

The gospel revelation, which originates in the goodness of God, and is the best gift of divine

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[1] *Which bringeth,* &c.] "Either *hath appeared to all men,* as Theophylact; or, with others, *that bringeth salvation to all men.*" Estius *apud* Bowyer.

[2] *Hath shone forth.*] επεφανη, "hath shined out or risen like a bright sun, or a cheering constellation, upon a benighted or dark world." Benson: vide also Macknight. "The gospel is called the grace of God, either because it is the greatest favour which God has bestowed on man, or because it teaches the doctrine of God's great favour to men." Macknight. The gospel, that grace of God which containeth the promise of everlasting salvation.

Ch. II. Ver. 11. mercy to mankind, the design of which is to save men of all nations and ranks, without any distinction of Jew or Gentile, bond or free, from ignorance and superstition, from vice and misery, has risen upon the world like the morning sun, and diffuses its glorious light through all nations.

12. *Instructing us that, denying ungodliness*[1] *and worldly desires, we should live soberly and righteously and religiously*[2] *in this present world.*

The design of the gospel is not to impose rites and ceremonies, to introduce innovations into civil life, and to substitute forms of worship for practical religion, but to reclaim men from impiety and vice, and to make them truly and habitually virtuous. It is intended to teach men to renounce all false conceptions of God, and of the worship and service that he requires, all superstitious notions, all idolatrous rites, and all those vicious affections and criminal practices which the world regards with indifference, and which the prevailing superstitions

[1] *Ungodliness.*] "By *ungodliness,*" says Dr. Benson, "I would understand atheism and irreligion, blasphemy, perjury, profane cursing and swearing, contempt of God, a want of due reverence to him, neglect of his worship, judging hardly or speaking with disrespect of his providence, disobedience to his will. By worldly lusts may be understood the other vices of mankind: every thing contrary to the *sobriety* and *righteousness* recommended in the next verse. All Christians are concerned to avoid these things; but they might be here condemned with a peculiar view to the character of the Cretans."

[2] *Soberly,* &c.] "*soberly,* i. e. wisely regulating our passions, affections, and appetites: *righteously,* i. e. with justice and equity, kindness, and beneficence towards men; *godlily,* i. e. paying due homage, submission, and obedience to God." Benson.

tolerate and encourage; and it requires that we should live in the conscientious discharge of every religious and moral duty; in the strict government of the appetites and passions; in the exercise of justice, fidelity, and kindness to our fellow-creatures; and in the diligent performance of the duties we owe to the Supreme Being; to fear and love him, and to live under a commanding sense of his presence and inspection in all our transactions with men, in all our intercourse with the world. Ch. II. Ver. 12.

Earnestly expecting that blessed hope[3], *even the manifestation of the glory of the great God, and of our saviour*[4] *Jesus Christ.* 13.

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[3] *Earnestly expecting that blessed hope.*] "gladly entertaining the happy expectation." Wakefield. See Acts xxiv. 15, 2 Tim. iv. 8.

[4] *Of the great God and of our Saviour.*] "Our Saviour at the last day will appear clothed in his own glory, attended by his Father's glory. Matt. xvi. 27, Mark viii. 38, Luke ix. 26. By the great God, therefore, must be understood the one God and Father of all, who is here and every where else most evidently distinguished from our saviour Jesus Christ. This title is never applied to Jesus Christ in the scriptures, but frequently to the Father, and to him alone." Benson. Beza and others render the words, *our great God and saviour Jesus Christ*; and they say that the appearance of God is a phrase never used in the New Testament. But most certainly Christ is never called *the great God*, nor had the apostle any conception that his words could be so perverted. Macknight well observes, "It is not the appearance of God, but of the glory of the great God here mentioned." Both Newcome and Wakefield render the clause, "the appearance of the great God, and of our saviour Jesus Christ."

"From this expression," says Dr. Priestley, "some have hastily inferred that Jesus Christ and 'the great God' were the same person. But a saying of our Saviour himself will clearly explain this: he says, that he shall return in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels. The appear-

Ch. II. Ver. 13. Christianity requires the practice of these duties, and enforces them by the most powerful sanctions; elevating us to the awful and delightful expectation of a second appearance of our honoured Master Jesus Christ: an appearance, not in the humble form in which he first published his gospel in the world, and died upon the cross. Oh, no! when he shall return again, he will appear in his own glory, and in the glory of his great God and Father, and all his holy angels with him; and being seated on the throne of his glory, the dead, both small and great, shall be judged by him according to their works. Yet, even then, he will maintain the character of the Saviour and the friend of his faithful followers.

14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*[1], *and purify to himself a peculiar people*[2], *zealous of good works*[3].

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ance of the great God, therefore, signifies nothing more than that glorious presence of God which will accompany Jesus Christ when he shall return to raise the dead and judge the world." "*Dicitur hæc Dei et Christi majestas, quia Deus majestatem illam Christo tribuit. Alii utrumque prædicatum ad idem subjectum, Christum nempe, referunt, contra quam sententiam vide quæ Moldenhawerus recte monuit, in annotationibus ad hunc locum.*" Rosenmuller.

[1] *Redeem us from all iniquity:*] *i. e.* to recover us from a Gentile state. "Here," says Dr. Priestley, "we see the true meaning of Christian redemption. It is a deliverance from iniquity, and all the effects of it, by making us virtuous and good, and by no means a deliverance from the wrath of God by the death of Christ. The phrase 'peculiar people' is borrowed from the Old Testament, where the Jewish nation is said to be a peculiar people, that is, distinguished from all other nations for great and valuable purposes. In like manner, in the Christian

This Saviour was lately upon earth in a very humble form, and after he had fulfilled his ministry in preaching the gospel he suffered death upon the cross, that he might put an end to the Jewish dispensation, and introduce and seal a new, a universal, and perpetual covenant, extending to heathen as well as to Jews; to recover those of us who were under the dominion of ignorance, idolatry, and vice, to truth, piety, and virtue; and the great design of all was to set apart for himself a people distinguished from all the rest of mankind by their zeal, not for speculative opinions, not for useless and burdensome rites, but for the practice of substantial and universal virtue. This, under the Christian dispensation, is the main distinction between those who are the true and approved servants of God, and the unbelieving, idolatrous, and wicked world. Ch. II. Ver. 14.

3. The apostle enjoins it upon Titus to insist strongly upon these topics, ver. 15.

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dispensation, all good men may be considered as the peculiar people of Christ, without any distinction of nations."

[2] *A peculiar people.*] περιουσιον. Compare Ex. xix. 5, Deut. vii. 6. The Jews were formerly the peculiar people of God. Now, believing Gentiles are taken into that honourable relation. "*Populus eximius, præstans: a* περειμι, *superior sum, antecello.*" Rosenmuller.

[3] *Zealous of good works.*] "When our Lord and his apostles have laid such stress upon good works, and have frequently declared them absolutely necessary to salvation, none who profess Christianity ought to neglect the practice of them, much less speak of them with aversion and contempt." Benson.

Ch. II. Ver. 15. *These things*[1] *speak and exhort, and reprove with all authority. Let no man despise thee*[2].

Let these important topics which I have now suggested, viz. the great design and the awful expectations of the gospel, be the constant theme of your discourse both in public and in private. Upon these principles ground all your exhortations to the different classes of mankind, to perform the duties which the gospel requires; for if this will not influence men to repent of their crimes, and to live in the practice of virtue, nothing will. If any object to your doctrine, and are desirous of substituting the observation of ceremonies for the performance of duty, confute and expose their pernicious errors: and if any act upon these dangerous principles, reprove them with prudence, with fidelity, and with authority, mindful of the commission under which you act, and knowing the powers with which you are invested, and the purposes for which they were given; do not tamely submit to insults, which would lessen your character and impede your usefulness.

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[1] *These things.*] Dr. Benson observes, that "by instruction and authority from the apostles Evangelists might teach, preach, reprove, rebuke, exhort; but they are never said to have testified the grand fact of Christ's resurrection."

[2] *Let no man despise thee.*] Compare Tim. iv. 12. The apostle does not say to Titus, Let no man despise thy youth: a proof that Titus was older than Timothy. See Benson and Priestley.

SECTION V.

THE APOSTLE exhorts Titus to press upon his hearers the due performance of their civil and social duties, which he enforces by considerations peculiar to the Christian religion. Ch. iii. 1—7. Ch. III.

1. The apostle exhorts Titus to remind his hearers of their duties to magistrates and civil authorities, and to recommend a quiet, peaceable spirit, ver. 1, 2.

Admonish them to be submissive to authorities and powers, to be ready to obey them in every good work[3]. Ver. 1.

Remind the converts in Crete that they are not, by their profession of the Christian religion, absolved from their obligation to obey their civil rulers, as the Jewish zealots often teach their misguided proselytes. Christianity is no enemy to social order: let believers know, therefore, that their religion requires them to yield subjection to the civil authorities, in what hands soever they may be lodged, and in whatever manner they may be exercised, even

[3] *To obey them in every good work.*] πειθαρχειν προς παν. So Wakefield. "Put them in mind of a ready obedience to these in every good work." By others the clauses are kept distinct: "Put *men* in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." Newcome.

Ch. III. Ver. 1. though the magistrate should be a heathen, and his government oppressive and unjust. As the Christian religion is far from abridging men's civil rights, so neither does it confer any civil privilege. And as the Christian converts must submit to their civil governors, whatever their character may be, so they must be active, ready, and cheerful in their obedience, when they are required to do any thing which may contribute to the peace and prosperity of the community; and at all times they must be attentive to their social duties.

2. *To calumniate no man, to avoid contention, to be gentle, showing all meekness to all men.*

The disciples of Christ, whose doctrine is a law of kindness, are strictly prohibited from using harsh and opprobrious language. They must not needlessly speak evil of others, even when it may be done with truth; much less may they calumniate and blast the reputation of their neighbours by false and malicious misrepresentations of their language, character, or conduct. Quarrelling and fighting are utterly inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity, which strongly inculcates gentleness, forbearance, and a meek and forgiving spirit to all men of all countries, parties, and sects, whatever injuries they may commit, or whatever provocations they may offer.

2. The mercy of God in the gospel dispensation purifies the heart from the unsocial and malignant passions which were indulged in an unconverted

state, and infuses a spirit of universal goodness, Ch. III. ver. 3—7.

For we also[1] *were formerly without understanding, disobedient, erring, enslaved to various appetites and pleasures*[2], *living in malice and envy, odious, and hating one another*[3]. Ver. 3.

For we who are now converted to the Christian religion, and whose lives are regulated by the precepts and by the spirit of Christianity, were in our unconverted state as immoral and as profligate as the unchristianized world still is. We were once destitute of all just sentiments of religion, disobedient to the laws of God and man, wandering in the

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[1] *For we also.*] Benson and Priestley think the apostle only is intended, Newcome only Gentiles, Macknight only Jews. Probably both Jews and Gentiles are to be included: *q. d.* We may well be disposed to exercise meekness and gentleness to others, having ourselves needed it so much while we remained in an unconverted state.

[2] *Appetites and pleasures.*] επιθυμιαις και ηδοναις. Dr. Benson observes, that "these words do not always express *impure desire* and voluptuousness (vide Steph. *Thesaur.*), but merely intense inclination, Mark iv. 19, 1 Thess. ii. 17; and pleasure, which is not inconsistent with Saul's character before his conversion." He remarks, that "the apostle does not mention idolatry, adultery, theft, &c., which were the gross vices of idolatrous Gentiles."

[3] *One another.*] The Æthiopic reads αδελφους, *the brethren*; which, if admitted, would be peculiarly applicable to Paul. See Benson. Dr. Benson's principal reason for limiting this description to the apostle himself seems to be, that the abundant effusion of the holy spirit, noted ver. 6, was only applicable to himself as an apostle. But it seems not unlikely that the apostle might use this expression to denote the abundance of spiritual gifts communicated to the primitive believers; and that he might mean to include believers in general, without excepting those whose conduct antecedent to their conversion had, like his own, been least stained with the grosser vices.

Ch. III. Ver. 3. paths of error and vice, the wretched slaves of appetite and passion, intemperate, malignant, envious, odious, and delighting to injure each other. Such was once our disgrace and misery.

4. *But when the kindness of God our saviour, and*
5. *his love toward man, shone forth, he saved*[1] *us, not by works of justification*[2] *which we did, but according to his mercy, by the laver of regeneration*[3], *and*

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[1] *Saved.*] "delivered us from the miserable and wicked state in which we were living before we believed the gospel." Macknight. See Newcome and Benson. "shone forth." Macknight. See ch. ii. 11.

[2] *By works of justification.*] "justifying works; works tending to gain us admission into the gospel covenant." Newcome.

[3] *The laver of regeneration.*] λουτρον *proprie* balneum, *per metonymiam subjecti* lavacrum, *ipsa aqua in balneo.*" Schleusner. When a Jew or a heathen was converted to the Christian religion, the change which took place in his apprehensions, in his affections, in his character, and his expectations, was so great and extraordinary, that it seemed as though he had become an inhabitant of a new world; and this change is sometimes compared to a resurrection from the dead (see Rom. vi.); and sometimes, as in the text, to a new birth. Compare John iii. 3—7, 1 Pet. i. 3, 23. They who are introduced into this state are said to be *saved,* i. e. rescued from the bondage of idolatry, or from the yoke of the law (see ver. 5); and this *not by works of righteousness which they had done,* but by the *free mercy of God,* who had invited them into the gospel covenant, without any antecedent claim of merit in them, entirely of his own gratuitous goodness. And as baptism was the appointed symbol by which the believer was to express his conversion to the Christian faith, his transition from the unbelieving world into the holy community, this rite is sometimes spoken of as if it were the actual change, of which it was the authorized symbol. So Acts xxii. 16, Ananias says to Paul, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." See also John iii. 5, 1 Pet. iii. 21. And in the text we are said to be saved by the *washing* or *the laver of regeneration,* in connexion with the renovation of the holy spirit. Hence it was, that the word παλιγγενεσια, *regeneration,* was used by the early ecclesiastical writers for bap-

by the renovation of the holy spirit[4], *which he shed on us richly through Jesus Christ our saviour.* Ch III. Ver. 6.

Such was the unhappy condition both of Jews and Gentiles, when the joyful tidings of the gospel were proclaimed to the world; but when this best gift of God to man, this strongest proof of divine benignity and good-will, enlightened the benighted world with its beautiful ray, God our creator and deliverer saved us thereby from the darkness, the errors, the vices, and the misery of our former state. And this he did, not because we, in consequence of our wise improvement of past privileges, had entitled ourselves to still superior advantages. Far from it: on the contrary, our apostasy and vices had incurred a just sentence of condemnation; and our present improved and happy state is entirely owing to the free unmerited mercy of God, whose good-

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tism, which was the emblem of the change produced. And a baptized person was said to be *regenerated:* referring solely to his *external* and *professed,* not to his *moral* state. Vide Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clem. Alex. and Theophilus, as referred to by Whitby *in loc.* But this use of the symbol for the thing signified, gradually introduced that enormous error which prevails in the Roman, and in some Protestant churches, that *Baptism is Christian regeneration:* so that a child born in original sin, and therefore liable to eternal misery, is sanctified and saved by being washed by a duly authorized priest: and even the greatest sinner, by being baptized, receives immediate and unqualified forgiveness. Who that looks into the New Testament could ever have thought it possible that such monstrous absurdities could have been fastened upon it? and who would suspect that such absurdities could have found advocates among men of learning in the present enlightened and inquisitive age?

[4] *Renovation of the holy spirit.*] "that renovation of mind which the holy spirit usually communicated to converts in those ages had the strongest tendency to produce." Newcome.

Ch. III. Ver. 6. ness prompted him to interpose for our relief; and by whose blessing upon the means of instruction, we have been induced to enter ourselves as members of the Christian community, by the solemn rite of baptism; and have, as it were, been introduced into a new world, in which our views, our feelings, our expectations, and our conduct, as well as our privileges and obligations, are totally changed from what they formerly were. To which happy renovation, the abundant effusion of the holy spirit from Jesus Christ, who has been appointed by God to be the deliverer of mankind, has in no small degree contributed, having supplied us with the most convincing evidence of the truth of the Christian doctrine, and thereby excited the most glorious and interesting expectations.

7. *That, being justified through his favour, we might become heirs, as to the hope*[5], *of eternal life.*

He gave us the gospel freely, and poured out his spirit upon us abundantly, that we might be convinced of the truth of the evangelical doctrine; and that, by our cordial acceptance, and our public profession of the Christian religion, we might be advanced to the character and privilege of sons, and might become expectants of the inheritance of everlasting life; a glorious and awful expectation, which,

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[5] *As to the hope.*] κατ' ελπιδα. "Include this between commas, to connect κληρονομοι with ζωης, which would otherwise want a genitive. Piscator, Knatchbull, Grotius. The words seem to disturb the sense, and may therefore be omitted. They are wanting in one manuscript. Dr. Owen." Bowyer.

to every virtuous believer, shall in due time be fulfilled to its utmost extent; and which in the mean time may justly animate them to the discharge of every duty, and console them under every loss and every suffering. Ch. III. Ver. 7.

SECTION VI.

THE APOSTLE directs the evangelist to recommend honourable industry, to avoid useless disputations, to dismiss contentious and factious persons from the society; and concludes the epistle with some particular charges, with salutations, and the apostolical benediction. Ch. iii. 8—15.

1. The apostle desires that Titus would insist strongly upon honourable industry, ver. 8.

This doctrine[2] *is worthy of credit. And these* 8.
things[3] *I will, that thou strongly affirm; so that they who have believed in God may be careful to excel in reputable occupations*[4]. *These are honourable and useful to mankind.*

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[2] *This doctrine:*] *i. e.* "the doctrine he had laid down in the four preceding verses." Newcome.

[3] *These* things.] τουτων. "these heirs of the hope of life, the converts from idolatry in Crete." Macknight. "these things." Newcome, Wakefield.

[4] *Excel in reputable occupations.*] καλων εργων προϊσασθαι. *i. e.* good works in general. Macknight, &c.; but the same expression occurs again ver. 14, where, from the connexion, Macknight allows it signifies honest occupations and trades: it

Ch. III. Ver. 8. The doctrine which I have advanced concerning the great goodness of God in our salvation by Jesus Christ, and in raising us to the hope of life by the gift of his spirit, is a truth of the greatest moment, and the belief of it is of the highest practical importance. And with regard to the converted Gentiles, who are thus unexpectedly become heirs of the hope of immortal life, I strictly charge you to inculcate upon them the practice of virtue, as a necessary means of obtaining it; and as the Cretans are as notorious for their indolence as for their intemperance, and as there are some persons who are disposed to teach, or to believe, that a life of indolence, and wasting time in angry disputes upon frivolous questions, is acceptable to God, I charge you, Titus, on the contrary to insist steadily upon this point, that all who have embraced and still continue in the Christian faith, who, having been converted from idolatry, have become the worshipers of the one true God, shall pursue some honest and reputable occupation, by which they may be able to maintain themselves and their fa-

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seems probable, therefore, that this is the meaning here. προϊσταϑαι, "*bona opera tueri, juvare.*" Newcome, Kypke, Ellys. "that those who trust in God may study to be foremost in good works." Wakefield.—"be careful to *stand up* for good works." Benson. Grotius's observations are excellent: "*Præesse bonis operibus non est aliud quam domum suam facere honesti alicujus opificii officinam, omnes suos exercere in laboribus honestis, non agere vitam lenonum, parasitorum, scenicorum, aruspicum, aut his similem. Hunc sensum nobis monstrat eadem sententia repetita infra* 14. *Opponuntur hæc ei quod modo de Cretensibus dixerat* γαστερες αργαι."

milies without being a burden upon the community. It is by honourable industry in the proper business of life that the disciples of Christ will do the most credit to their profession; for it is by these means that they will make themselves most useful to mankind, both by their good example and their beneficent actions. Ch. III. Ver. 8.

2. The apostle dissuades Titus from useless controversy, ver. 9.

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies[1], *and disputes, and contentions about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain.* 9.

Time is too precious to be wasted upon trifling disputes, either in settling intricate genealogies, or in quarrelling about distinctions of food, distinctions of days, or other subjects which the zealots of the law of Moses, burdened with the additional encumbrances of Pharisaic tradition, are so eager to introduce, which they so rigorously impose, and for which they so intemperately contend.

3. The apostle advises Titus to dismiss from the Christian society men of a contentious and factious spirit, ver. 10, 11.

Reject a man who is a fomenter of divisions[2] 10.

[1] *Genealogies.*] Bengelius and others suppose the Gnostic doctrine of the Æons to be referred to here; but being mentioned in connexion with disputes about the law, it seems probable that Jewish genealogies are particularly alluded to.

[2] *A fomenter of divisions.*] αἱρετικον ανθρωπον, *a heretic:* i. e. "a man who teaches what he knows to be erroneous." Whitby,

Ch. III. Ver. 11. *after the first and second admonition*[1], *knowing that such an one is wholly perverted*[2], *and erreth*[3], *being self-condemned*[4].

Macknight, Newcome. "a man who errs in fundamental doctrine; and self-condemned, because he publicly avows that which furnishes matter for his condemnation." Doddridge. "a man who foments divisions, or sects, or parties." Wakefield. "The word αἱρεσις, *heresy*, does not with the ancients," says Dr. Benson, "signify doctrine, but a *sect* or *party*. It is usually rendered *sect* in our common translation. In 1 Cor. xi. 19 it is rendered *heresies*, but in the margin *sects*: as it is most reasonable to understand it Gal. v. 20, 2 Pet. ii. 2, where it is translated *heresies*. *Schism* is a rent, a groundless faction or division among members of the same congregation; *heresy* has its foundation in schism. A heresy is a sect, faction, or party; or, the persons of which that party consists. Vide 1 Cor. xi. 18, 19: 'I hear there be divisions (marg. *schisms*) among you; and I partly believe it, for there must be also heresies (marg. *sects*) among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest.'

"A heretic, then, (αἱρετικος) is a sect-maker, or sectary: one who makes or follows a sect or party. Among the philosophers the word was of a middle signification. Acts xxvi. 5 heresy is used in a good sense; but when it is condemned as one of the works of the flesh, it is used in a bad sense.

"Those who to the best of their judgement take Christ for their head and guide in religious matters, though such men may perhaps mistake the meaning of several texts, or judge wrong as to points of doctrine, and though others may perhaps exclude them from their communion, yet they constitute a true church of Christ, though few in number; and those who oppose them and renounce communion with them are the heretics, how numerous soever they may be, and how great soever their worldly power."

Such are the judicious observations of Dr. Benson in his excellent note upon this text.—Archbishop Newcome refers to Bishop Pearce's Sermon upon the subject, as above all worthy of being consulted.

[1] *Reject after admonition.*] "It is not said, Imprison him, tease him with artful examinations, or put him to the torture to make him confess; and then, if he will not recant, roast him by a slow and lingering fire. Such rules never proceeded from

If any men of a contentious overbearing disposition, and particularly, any of the warm zealots for the law, should, notwithstanding your efforts to maintain the peace, the order, and the liberty of the Gentile church, and to banish these frivolous and vexatious questions, persist in propagating their obnoxious tenets, and should disturb the peace of the society by forming parties in opposition to the doctrine that we are authorized to teach, it is my advice to you, once or twice, to warn such sectaries in a calm and serious manner of their guilt and their danger, and to expostulate with them concerning the impropriety of their conduct in destroying the harmony of the society, by dividing it upon questions of so little importance: and if they refuse to listen to your advice, and to alter their conduct, discard them from the church, and regard them no

Ch. III. Ver. 11.

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the apostles of our Lord, but from the ministers of Satan. Exciting the rage of the populace, or, awakening the zeal of the magistrate, inflicting pains and penalties, &c., has never yet been found the way to enlighten men's understandings, or to make them better Christians or honester men. Titus was not rashly to reject a heretic: if upon repeated admonition he repented, he was not to reject him at all; but if he did not thereupon amend, he was to be rejected as incorrigible, and as no longer under the evangelist's care and inspection." Benson. "*Reject*, avoid, withdraw thyself from." Newcome.

[2] *Is wholly perverted.*] ἐξεστραπται. The word is applied to *buildings*; and signifies, to be overturned from the foundation. Estius, Macknight.

[3] *Erreth.*] ἁμαρτανω, "*aberro a scopo proposito*:" to err from the mark, to wander from the road; to sin. Schleusner.

[4] *Being self-condemned.*] "He that thus breaks off from the unity of the church, doth in effect inflict that punishment upon himself which the church useth to malefactors; that is, cutting himself off from the church." Hammond.

Ch. III. Ver. 11. longer as members of the Christian community: for it is plain that people who are so zealous for Jewish rites are utter strangers to the doctrine and spirit of Christianity. If they were ever acquainted with it, they are now entirely alienated from it; and by setting themselves up at the head of factions and parties in opposition to us, they do in effect renounce communion with us, and pass a sentence of excommunication upon themselves.

4. He directs Titus to come to him at Nicopolis, and to give every necessary assistance to Zenas and Apollos, ver. 12, 13.

12. *When I shall send to thee Artemas or Tychicus, endeavour to come to me to Nicopolis* [1], *for I have determined to pass the winter there.*

I propose to stay a few months longer at Ephesus,

[1] *Nicopolis.*] If the hypothesis be admitted that the Epistle to Titus was written from Ephesus in the beginning of A.D. 56, the apostle must have changed his plan of passing the winter at Nicopolis. After having received the Epistle from the Corinthians and returned his answer, he determined to postpone his visit to Corinth till he had learned how his Letter had been received, and the effect which it had produced. For this purpose, having sent Artemas to Crete to relieve Titus, he directed that evangelist to go directly to Corinth, and having seen how matters stood there, to make a report to him at Troas: intending at that time to stay at Ephesus till Pentecost. But being obliged to depart sooner than he intended in consequence of the tumult occasioned by Demetrius and the artists, he did not find Titus at Troas, and being impatient to receive tidings from him, he crossed over to Macedonia, where he met him. Titus, therefore, must have left Crete immediately upon Artemas's arrival; and meeting Paul in Macedonia, probably accompanied him to Illyricum, and passed the winter of the year 56 with the apostle there.

and at the latter end of the year I intend to go to Nicopolis in Thrace, where I mean to pass the winter. Before that time I shall send either Artemas or Tychicus to relieve you from the duties of your laborious office, after which I hope you will come to me at Nicopolis and spend the winter with me. Ch. III. Ver. 12.

Diligently help forward on their way Zenas, the teacher of the law, and Apollos, that they may want nothing. 13.

Two of our friends, Zenas, who before his conversion to Christianity was an eminent teacher of the Jewish law, and Apollos, so well known in the churches as an eloquent preacher of the gospel, are now upon a journey, intending to promote the knowledge of the Christian religion in the countries which they visit. In their way they mean to pass through Crete. When you see them, give them every assistance to render their visit pleasant and useful while they remain with you, and to help them forward in their journey, and assist them in the purposes of their mission, when they depart from Crete.

5. The apostle again recommends honourable industry, and, after a general salutation, he concludes the epistle with the apostolical benediction, ver. 14, 15.

And let our converts *also learn to excel in reputable occupations*[2] *for necessary exigencies, that they be not unfruitful.* 14.

[2] *Reputable occupations,* &c.] vid. ver. 8. " *for necessary uses,* in respect to the wants of their fellow-Christians. As

Ch. III. Ver. 14.

Having mentioned the assistance which I wish you to afford to Zenas and Apollos, it reminds me once more to request that you will urge the converts from heathenism to the Christian faith to distinguish themselves from their indolent and intemperate neighbours by industry in their proper callings, that so they may have something in store to lay out for useful purposes, and particularly to promote the knowledge and the practice of the Christian religion among those who have not yet been blessed with the light of truth; and to assist in bearing the expenses of missionaries who, like these two eminent teachers of the gospel, are willing to devote themselves to this laborious and hazardous office. Thus they will prove to the world that the faith which they profess is an operative and useful principle, when they see its beneficial effects, in producing

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concerning liberality and hospitality to them; especially to propagators of the gospel." Newcome.

"The apostle," says Dr. Priestley, "now concludes his epistle with giving directions about particular things. These little circumstances, though of no use to us in any other view, are of the greatest use in proving the genuineness of the epistles. They are so written, as that no man can seriously believe them to be forgeries: accordingly, it never was doubted either that they were Paul's, or that they were written in the circumstances to which he alludes. The proof of the truth of the gospel history from this one circumstance is of a peculiarly clear and satisfactory kind to those who properly attend to it; but few appear to me to have done this. It would be quite as easy to account for the writing of the Epistles of Cicero, upon the supposition of there being no truth in the Roman history, as to account for the writing of these of Paul, on the idea of there being no truth in the Christian history: so exactly do they correspond to one another."

industry, sobriety, economy, and liberality, among those who were formerly idle, intemperate, sordid, and selfish. Ch. III. Ver. 14.

All who are *with me salute thee. Salute those who love us in the faith.* The *favour* of God *be with you all.* 15.

The Christians at Ephesus send their affectionate salutations to you. Salute in my name all those who are our friends in the true and uncorrupted faith. With regard to those who debase the Christian doctrine by mixtures of Jewish ceremonies, I know that they are no friends of mine, and that they are fully aware that my unwearied efforts are continually exerted to oppose their pernicious errors. To send Christian salutations to such would be hypocrisy in me, and by them would be regarded as an insult. To conclude: As I have written this Epistle, not merely for the instruction of you, my convert to the faith, my companion in labour and in danger, and my representative in Crete, but for the benefit of the whole community of Christians in that extensive island, my apostolical benediction rest upon you all! May the favour of Almighty God be with you! Possessed of this, you will be safe and happy.

THE EPISTLE

TO

THE HEBREWS.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THE antiquity of the EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS has never been disputed. It was written in the apostolic age, and anterior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; for it contains many expressions which plainly imply that the Temple service was then existing. And as the epistle was certainly written by a Hebrew Christian and addressed to believing Hebrews, if that dreadful catastrophe had actually taken place, it is morally impossible that there should not have been some direct mention of it, or some plain allusion to it.

The author of this epistle is uncertain. It is commonly ascribed to the apostle Paul: but the ancients were divided in their opinion concerning it[1]; some giving it to Paul, others to Barnabas, or

[1] "This epistle," says Dr. Lardner, "was generally received in ancient times by those Christians who used the Greek

Clement, or Luke. It was a prevalent opinion among the ancients, and has been adopted by some modern critics, that the apostle dictated the epistle in Hebrew, or Syro-Chaldaic, and that it was translated into Greek by Luke or Clement, or rather that the ideas and arguments are Paul's, but that the style and language are Luke's.

That the language of the epistle is not that of the apostle Paul, is very generally allowed; and the reasons for this opinion are assigned by Origen, who was a competent judge of style and composition, being himself a good writer in Greek. "The

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language and lived in the Eastern part of the Roman empire. Clement of Alexandria before the end of the second century received the epistle as Paul's, and quotes it without hesitation. It is not, however, expressly quoted as Paul's by any Latin writer in the first three centuries." Lardner's *Works*, vol. vi. p. 395, Dr. Kippis's edition.

Some writers, both ancient and modern, have supposed that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written in Hebrew or Syriac, and translated into Greek. This hypothesis was defended by J. D. Michaelis, but refuted (says Rosenmuller) by Semler, who proved that the apostle wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews in Greek, in a *Dissertation* published at Halle, 1761. It seems, however, strange, that an epistle to the Hebrews should have been written in Greek: a language which it is probable that most of those who lived in Palestine did not understand. Some, therefore, have thought that the epistle was not addressed to them, but to the Hebrew Christians dispersed through the Roman empire. Lardner agrees with those who think the epistle was originally written in Greek, and argues against Spanheim and Wetstein from the occurrence of Greek paronomasias, or the concurrence of words of similar sound: a proof which he thinks unanswerable. The quotations from the Old Testament being all made from the LXX., and that even where it materially differs from the Hebrew, is likewise a strong presumption that the Epistle was written in Greek.

style of the Epistle to the Hebrews," says that learned Father, " hath not the apostle's rudeness of speech; but as to the texture of it, it is very elegant Greek, as every one will allow who is able to judge of differences of style. If I were to speak my opinion, I should say that the sentiments are the apostle's; but the language and composition another's, who committed to writing the apostle's sense, and, as it were, reduced into commentaries the things spoken by his master; so that if any church receive this epistle for Paul's, it is to be commended; for the ancients ascribed it to Paul; but no person certainly knows the composer but God. But the report transmitted to us by some is, that Clemens, who was bishop of Rome, wrote the epistle, and by others that it was written by Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts [1]."

[1] See Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* lib. vi. cap. 25. Dr. Lardner's opinion is, that Paul dictated the epistle in Hebrew; and another, who was a great master of the Greek language, immediately wrote down the apostle's sentiments in his own elegant Greek. But who this assistant of the apostle was, is altogether unknown. " This is an admirable epistle," continues this learned writer, " but singular in sentiments and language: somewhat different in both these respects from all the other writings in the New Testament. And whose is the language, as seems to me, is altogether unknown, whether that of Zenas or Apollos, or some other of the apostle's assistants or fellow-labourers." Lardner's *Works*, vol. vi. p. 410.

Eusebius says: " Paul having written to the Hebrews in their own language, some think that the evangelist Luke, and others that Clement, translated it into Greek." *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iii. cap. 38.

Philaster, bishop of Brescia about 380, says: " There are some who do not allow the Epistle to the Hebrews to have been written by Paul, but say it is either an epistle of the apostle

That the apostle Paul was not the author of this epistle is, I think, sufficiently evident: and though I was once inclined to the opinion of those who think that the ideas are Paul's, but the dress and language Luke's, upon further consideration I incline to believe that the apostle had no concern either in the matter or the form of this epistle: for though he frequently borrows the language of the scriptures to express his own ideas, and occasionally, perhaps, indulges in that loose and figurative interpretation of the Old Testament which was the fashion of the age, he never carries his allegorical

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Barnabas, or of Clement bishop of Rome: but some say it is an epistle of Luke the evangelist. Moreover some reject it, as being more eloquent than the apostle's other writings."

Jerome, about 392, says: "The epistle called to the Hebrews is not thought to be Paul's because of the difference of argument and style; but either Barnabas's, as Tertullian thought, or the evangelist Luke's, according to some others, or Clement's, bishop of Rome, who, as some think, being much with him, clothed and adorned St. Paul's sense in his own language. Moreover he wrote as a Hebrew to Hebrews, in pure Hebrew, it being his own language; whence it came to pass, that being translated it has more elegance in the Greek than his other epistles." See Lardner, vol. vi. pp. 408, 409.

"*Cujus scriptoris sit hæc Epistola non mirum est hodie dubitari, cum etiam veteres dubitaverint.*" Grotius; who thinks it impossible that Paul should be the author: "*ideo quod Paulinæ epistolæ inter se sint germanæ, pari charactere et dicendi modo: hæc vero manifeste ab iis discrepet, selectiores habens voces Græcas, leniusque fluens, non autem fracta brevibus incisis, ac salebrosa.*" He concludes that the epistle was written by Luke. The truth is, as Origen states it, that God only knows the author; and it is in vain to bewilder ourselves in conjecture. It is not, however, improbable that it was written by a hearer or an associate of Paul; which may account for his arguing in some instances from the same premises as the apostle. Comp. Heb. ii. 8 with 1 Cor. xv. 27.

reasoning to that great, and I had almost said extravagant extent, in which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews indulges himself.

Still, however, it cannot be denied that the epistle was written in the apostolic age, and probably by some apostolic man; some associate of the apostles: not Luke, who was probably a Greek; whose compositions are chaste and elegant, and whose taste and judgement could never stoop to the verbal and declamatory mode of reasoning adopted by this author; which, however, might not offend Barnabas or Apollos, who were Jews by birth. The fashion of allegorizing the Old Testament might not be unpleasing to those who were accustomed to Jewish habits of thinking and reasoning, and who were not proficients in the dialectic art. It is, however, quite impossible that such writing and reasoning should have any claim to inspiration. Nevertheless, whatever may be thought of the *arguments* upon which the writer builds his conclusions, the *conclusions* themselves are undoubtedly true. The reasonings are adapted to the principles and the prejudices of the simple and uninformed Hebrew believer; but the doctrine is plainly that of the apostles[1], such

[1] "*Distinguenda sunt argumenta quibus auctor hujus epistolæ utitur ab ipsis veritatibus, quas proponit. Bene Clericus ad Hammond, ad Heb.* ix. 16. *de auctore hujus epistolæ,* '*Capita omnia doctrinæ Christianæ, quæ persequitur, verissima sunt, et possunt ex reliqua scriptura probari: sed ratio, qua illa illustrat, plane est similis consuetudini illorum temporum, ut ex Philone intelligere licet, in quo sunt passim ejusmodi accommodationes locorum SS. ratiocinationesque inde deductæ, in quibus nulla grammaticæ

as the author had derived from the purest sources, uncorrupted with the base alloy either of Pharisaic tradition or of heathen philosophy.

There is a very considerable resemblance between the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that which is extant under the name of Barnabas. In both, the doctrinal part consists of strained allegorical interpretations of the Old Testament scriptures. The latter, however, carries his figurative interpretations to a still more extravagant extreme than the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and takes to himself no small degree of credit for his own ingenuity[1].

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ratio habetur, nec aliud spectatur, nisi ut res ipsa quæ iis illustratur, sit vera. Is mos erat illius ætatis, quem non magis mirari debemus, quam nostras ipsorum consuetudines hodiernas.' " Rosenmuller.

[1] This writer explains the law concerning the distinction of animals into clean and unclean, as intended to recommend moral purity, which he illustrates by some fanciful instances. Of one animal he says that it changes its sex every year; and of another, that it brings forth its young at its mouth. And he accounts for his own superior knowledge upon these subjects by special divine communications. See Barnab. *Epist.* part i. c. 10. The difference is so great between the nonsense of the doctrinal, and the wisdom of the practical part of this short epistle, that one might be tempted to believe that they were written by different authors. There is nothing in the Epistle to the Hebrews so absurd as these examples from that of Barnabas, though some of the analogies are equally far-fetched and irrelevant: particularly those which relate to Melchizedec, ch. vii. Dr. Lardner says, that " Barnabas often argues like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but without borrowing from him." *Works*, vol. ii. p. 20. It is not denied that the Epistle of Barnabas, with many fanciful analogies, contains many excellent things; Dr. Lardner, p. 12, justly observes, that " the first part is an exhortation to constancy in the belief and profession of the Christian doctrine, without the rites of the Jewish law. The second part contains moral instruction."

Nevertheless, in both these Epistles the practical part is excellent. In that of Barnabas, the moral instruction, which is found only in the Greek original, and not in the Latin version, is in no respect unworthy of the very chief of the apostles. Some learned men, among whom is Jeremiah Jones, think that the Epistle of Barnabas is a forgery of the second century: but the prevailing opinion is, that it is the production of some Hebrew Christian of the apostolic age, and that, if it were originally written by Barnabas, it has been tampered with by some early scribe. At any rate, it exhibits a specimen of the manner in which the scriptures were then interpreted.

There is, however, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, besides a great superiority in style, an ingenuity and coherence not to be found in the Epistle of Barnabas. The design of the author is to reconcile the minds of the Hebrew Christians to the doctrine of a suffering Messiah, and to warn those wavering believers of the danger of apostasy. And he conducts his argument with a considerable degree of ingenuity, and in a way which was most likely to make a favourable impression upon the feelings of the Jewish believers. He begins with expatiating upon the superior dignity of the messenger of the new covenant above all former prophets and messengers of God: and it is not till after he has stated that the person commissioned upon this important errand could not with propriety be an angel from heaven, or a being of any order superior to man-

kind, that he ventures to introduce the name of Jesus, as a person who, having by the gracious appointment of God tasted of death for the benefit of all, was for that reason already crowned with glory and honour, and ordained to universal dominion. And having shown how expedient, and even necessary, it was that the great deliverer of mankind should himself be a suffering human being, he proceeds to reconcile the believing Hebrews to this state of things, by running a parallel between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations, and by illustrating the great superiority of the latter, even in those articles in which the Jews were accustomed principally to glory [1] as the peculiar excellencies of their own institution. He particularly argues that the new dispensation possesses a superior lawgiver, a superior promise, a superior chieftain, and above all a superior priesthood, a superior temple service, a superior victim, and a superior mode of consecration and sacrifice: and, from the whole, he infers

[1] Rosenmuller, after stating the objection which the unbelieving Jews urged against the Christian revelation as every way inferior to that of Moses, adds, "*Contra hos igitur Paulus ostendit Jesum Nazarenum longe superiorem esse angelis, Mose, Pontifice Maximo V. T., omnibusque reliquis sacerdotibus; ex ejus morte et cruciatibus pro nobis perpessis, multo majora, et diuturniora bona ad nos redundare, quam ad Judæos ex cultu Levitico, &c. Ex his aliisque argumentis probat, Christianam religionem esse multo præstantiorem, perfectioremque illa vetere Judaica, et adhortatur Christianos ad constantiam in religione, et omnium virtutum indefessum studium. In toto hoc argumento tractando auctor se accommodat ingenio eorum, qui a Judaica ad Christianam religionem transierant, eosque a primis elementis religionis ad altiora ducit.*"

the extreme danger of apostasy, against which he frequently and solemnly warns them in the most earnest and affectionate language.

This epistle is divided into two Parts—DOCTRINAL and PRACTICAL. The former extends to the eighteenth verse of the tenth chapter, and the latter to the end of the epistle.

PART THE FIRST.

The writer endeavours to reconcile the Hebrews to the offensive DOCTRINES of the Christian dispensation, by showing its superiority in every important particular to the institutions of Moses; and to illustrate his argument,

FIRST, The author asserts the pre-eminence of the founder of the new dispensation over all former prophets and messengers of God, and infers the superior regard which is due to the dispensation introduced by him. Ch. i. 1—ii. 4.

SECONDLY. He argues that the nature of this dispensation required that the first teacher of it should not be an angel or a celestial spirit, but a suffering human being, of the same nature with those whom he came to redeem from death. Ch. ii. 5—18.

THIRDLY. The author briefly argues the superiority of Jesus to Moses. Ch. iii. 1—6.

FOURTHLY. The *rest* promised to believers, and into which Jesus conducts his followers, being su-

perior to that into which Joshua led the Israelites, the neglect of the proper means of securing it must be proportionably criminal and dangerous. Ch. iii. 7—iv. 13.

FIFTHLY. He expatiates upon the priesthood of Jesus, and in particular he argues at large the superiority of the priesthood of Christ, which is after the order of Melchisedec, to the Levitical priesthood, which was after the order of Aaron; and from these premises he infers the temporary duration and speedy abolition of the ceremonial law and the Mosaic institute. Ch. iv. 14—vii.

SIXTHLY. The author then proceeds to his main point of reconciling the minds of the believing Hebrews to the very offensive doctrine of a crucified Messiah, by representing the death of Christ as that of a victim of a superior nature, whose blood was shed to ratify a covenant far superior to that of Moses, of which sacrifice those of the Levitical institute were nothing more than types and shadows. Ch. viii. 1—x. 18.

With this important argument, which he labours with great industry and ingenuity, and which he sets in a variety of lights, he concludes the Doctrinal Part of the epistle.

PART THE SECOND.

The Second Part of the epistle contains the PRACTICAL APPLICATION of the doctrine which the author had advanced.

First. He urges the believing Hebrews to patience and to perseverance, and again warns them of the extreme danger of apostasy. Ch. x. 19, &c.

Secondly. He defines the nature of faith, and exemplifies the excellence of this valuable principle in the conduct of the Jewish worthies, whose history is recorded in the Old Testament. Ch. xi.

Thirdly. From these examples, from the character of Christ, and his fortitude under sufferings, and from the pre-eminent glory of the gospel dispensation, he urges the believing Hebrews to endure persecution with courage, and to adhere faithfully to their profession. Ch. xii.

Fourthly. He exhorts them to the practice of various virtues, and to yield a respectful submission to their Christian and apostolic instructors. Ch. xiii. 1—17.

Fifthly. He concludes the epistle with earnestly recommending himself to their prayers, with devout wishes for their improvement, with apologizing for the freedom which he had used, and with the usual benediction, ver. 18, &c.

In the Exposition of this celebrated epistle I have adopted that interpretation which, to the best of my judgement, after the most serious examination, expresses the true meaning of the writer. This in some instances differs considerably from the usual and popular mode of explaining the text: but I hope that it is supported by evidence sufficient to

convince the candid, the serious, and the inquisitive; for such only are open to conviction. All, therefore, that I request of the reader is, that he would read with candour, and judge with impartiality: and may the Spirit of Truth guide him into all truth!

THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

PART THE FIRST.

THE AUTHOR ENDEAVOURS TO RECONCILE THE MINDS OF THE BELIEVING HEBREWS TO THE OFFENSIVE DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION, BY SHOWING ITS SUPERIORITY IN EVERY IMPORTANT PARTICULAR TO THE INSTITUTES OF MOSES. Ch. I.

SECTION I.

THE WRITER asserts the superiority of Jesus to all former prophets and messengers of God, and argues the superior regard due to the dispensation which he was commissioned to introduce. Ch. i. 1—ii. 4.

1. THE author expresses in bold and highly figurative language the dignity of the character, and the importance of the message, of the Head and Publisher of the new dispensation, ver. 1—3.

Ch. I. Ver. 1. 2. *GOD, who in many parts, and in many ways*[1], *spake formerly to our fathers by the prophets, in these last days hath spoken to us by* his *son*[2], *whom he hath appointed heir*[3] *of all things, with a view to whom*[4] *he even constituted the* former *dispensations.*

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[1] *In many parts and in many ways.*] πολυμερως, *in many parts:* i. e. partly by one prophet, partly by another. See Peirce, Newcome, Macknight. πολυτροπως· "This clause," says Dr. Macknight, "does not refer to the different manners in which God revealed himself to the prophets, but to the different ways in which the prophets communicated the revelations they received to the fathers; they did it in types and figures, &c., whereas the gospel revelation was spoken by Christ and his apostles in one manner only, namely in plain language."

[2] *By* his *son.*] εν υἱῳ, *by a son.* Wakefield. It does not follow that Christ is of a different nature from former prophets because he is called a son, any more than that the servants of a household are of an inferior nature to the family whom they serve. It is a distinction of rank, not of nature.

[3] *Heir of all things.*] that is, "lord of all things." See Gal. iv. 1. Vide Crellius, Whitby, Macknight. Christ is lord of all things, as the whole human race, Jews and Gentiles, are to become subject to his spiritual authority; that is, to the gospel.

[4] *With a view to whom.*] δι' ὃ και τους αιωνας εποιησεν. Αιων, though it may sometimes signify *world* (which is however doubted by Sykes), see Heb. xi. 3, yet is often used for *age* or *dispensation.* Matt. xii. 32, xiii. 39; Mark x. 30; Luke xviii. 30; 1 Cor. ii. 6, x. 11; Col. i. 26; Heb. vi. 5, ix. 26. Δια with a genitive commonly expresses the instrumental cause, but sometimes also the final cause; and in this sense Grotius understands it here, and supposes a reference to an old proverb amongst the Jews, that the world was made for the Messiah. He appeals to Beza in support of this interpretation of δι' ὃ. Beza on Rom. vi. 4. See also the Scholiast on the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, p. 6., ed. Basil. Also Thucydides *Hist.* lib. vi. § 7. δι' ὑπερ παντα εκινδυνευον, "for whose sake they put every thing to hazard."—δια λογων, "with a view to conversation."

Ch. I. Ver. 2.

That God, whom we of the Hebrew nation have been taught to acknowledge and adore as the sole unrivalled Almighty Sovereign of the universe, selected long ago the posterity of Abraham to be the depositaries of his law, and to preserve in the world the knowledge and worship of himself as the one true and living God. This glorious Being, who communicated his will to our forefathers in past ages by his servants the prophets, revealing it gradually and occasionally, sometimes by visible appearances, sometimes by audible voices, and sometimes by visions and dreams, hath now, of late, been pleased to make an entire revelation of his gracious purposes to mankind, by the clear and direct instruction of a teacher expressly commissioned for this end, upon whom such distinguished honour has been conferred, that in comparison with

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Joseph. *Antiq.* lib. xviii. c. vii. § 7, 8, c. x. § 3.—δια νους, "with a view to be understood." 1 Cor. xiv. 19. See Locke on the place. "I think the words should be translated 'for whose sake,' or, 'upon whose account,' he made even the ages." Dr. Chandler on Eph. i. 11. This is a remarkable concession, as Dr. Chandler was a high Arian; of which doctrine this text is commonly regarded as one of the chief arguments. Mr. Simpson, *Ess.* viii. considers the plural form as the Hebrew superlative: "by whom he constituted the ages," τους αιωνας· *q. d.* this last and most important dispensation, the dispensation of the Messiah. According to this interpretation, the preposition δια retains its usual signification. "*Per Christum vere nova et alia secula Deus condidit, dum per eum plane novam, et a priore longe diversam, rerum ac mundi faciem induxit.*" "*Secula Deus per Christum fecisse dicitur, non quod omnia, quæ unquam extiterunt secula per eum condiderit, sed quod condiderit aliqua, nempe nova et a prioribus diversa, iisque longe feliciora.*" Crellius, Slichtingius.

Ch. I. Ver. 2. him all former prophets are but as servants in the household in respect to a son. This illustrious person is appointed to an inheritance worthy of his rank: the dominion over all things is given to him; and though he is not yet in full possession of all his glory, it is nevertheless the fixed purpose of his God and Father that all the nations of the earth shall in due time bow to his authority, and submit to his auspicious government. And indeed it is with a view to this last, most beneficial, universal, and perpetual dispensation, that all preceding dispensations have been introduced and established. The various revelations made from time to time to the ancient patriarchs were intended to prepare the way for a more glorious and universal diffusion of moral light; and all the rites and ceremonies of the law point to the same happy termination. All had a reference to this great teacher, and received their accomplishment in him.

3. *Who being*[1] *an effulgent ray*[2] *of his brightness,*

[1] *Who being.*] This context contains a description in highly figurative language of the character and condition of Jesus as the Messiah. He is distinguished from all preceding prophets, as a son from a servant;—he is made heir of all things, that is, Jews and Gentiles are equally the subjects of his kingdom. N.B. For this sense of the phrase *all things*, see an excellent dissertation by Mr. Tyrwhitt in *Commentaries and Essays*, vol. ii. No. 1.—With a view to him all former dispensations were arranged.—He is a ray of the divine brightness, as he clearly teaches the will of God;—he is an exact image of God himself, as he controuled the laws of nature at pleasure by the voluntary power of working miracles which was imparted to him;—he conducts all things by the powerful authority of God;—his cause and kingdom are carried on in the world by the irresistible

and an exact image of himself[3], *and conducting all things by his powerful authority*[4], *after he had* Ch. I. Ver. 3.

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agency of the Almighty;—he made purification of sin;—he consecrated a new and holy community to God;—and he is set down at the right hand of supreme majesty, or of the majesty on high, as he is risen from the dead, has ascended to heaven, and is advanced to universal spiritual dominion. The attentive reader here sees, what from the great influence of prejudice is not usually observed, the regular gradation of circumstances from the original designation of this great teacher through his life, doctrine, miracles, and death, to his glorious resurrection and ultimate advancement to the dignity and honour intended for him. And all this without offering any other violence to the language of the writer than what is usually offered to figurative language, viz. that of not understanding it in a literal sense. And in truth the common interpretation recedes as far from the literal sense, or nearly so, as the interpretation here given.

[2] *Effulgent ray.*] απαυγασμα, ἡλιε φεγγος, *the splendour of the sun.* Hesychius. απαυγη, ἡ εκλαμψις, *effulgence.* Suidas, Doddridge, Macknight. "ὁς ων. *Participium* ων *est et præsentis et præteriti imperfecti temporis.*" Crellius. See John ix. 25. The writer is here describing the character of Christ during his personal ministry.

[3] *An exact image of himself.*] χαρακτηρ της ὑποστασεως αυτε. Χαρακτηρ is the engraving of a seal, or the impression made by a seal upon wax. Ὑποστασις is *substance:* the image of his substance is the image of *himself.* See 2 Cor. ix. 4; Slichtingius, Crellius, and Grotius *in loc.* The meaning is probably the same as that of εν μορφη Θεε, Phil. ii. 6; and is to be explained of the possession of miraculous powers. Christ being the image of God no more proves his participation of the divine nature, than Adam being made in the image of God proves him to have been also divine. Sykes has an excellent note upon the word *hypostasis;* which, he says, "seems never to have been used to signify *person* till long after St. Paul's days, and should not be rendered so here. We find the term in metaphysical books applied to certain *properties* of the One God as eminently *subsisting* in him. Plato talks of three hypostases, not meaning three persons; for *unity* and *goodness* made two of these hypostases. Taking, then, *hypostasis* as signifying Essence with its properties, the Son is properly the image or just representation of God's properties, goodness, kindness," &c.

[4] *Conducting all things,* &c.] φερων τε τα παντα τω ῥηματι

Ch. I. Ver. 3. *by himself made the purification of sins* [1], *sat down at the right hand of supreme majesty* [2].

This illustrious teacher, like a beam of heavenly radiance, has diffused the clearest light over the divine dispensations: and by the mighty works which he was enabled to perform he exhibited a most striking and awful resemblance of that Being who has all the powers of nature under his controul. During his personal ministry, being armed with authority from God, he thus introduced his kingdom and established his doctrine: and when, by an event which, however unexpected and surprising, was far from being disgraceful to his person or his cause, he had prepared the way for the reconciliation of enemies and the introduction of aliens into covenant with God, he was quickly raised from this state of temporary depression, and advanced to

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τῆς δυναμεως αὐτε. Crellius understands this clause as exegetical of the preceding: "φερειν *hoc loco nihil aliud est quam* movere, agitare." Dr. Newcome explains it "bearing before him;" as the Greek word is used in the phrase αγειν και φερειν παντα. Αὐτε undoubtedly refers to God; the author uses ἑαυτε in the next clause where he means to speak of Jesus himself. See Peirce. "*Verbum potentiæ per hebraismum est verbum potens.*" Crellius. *q. d.* Ordering all things in the new dispensation by authority from God.

[1] *Purification of sins.*] The word *our*, ἡμων, in the received text, is wanting in the Alexandrine and other manuscripts. The writer with great address omits the express mention of the obnoxious subject of the crucifixion of Jesus. What he means by purification of sin he explains more at large, ch. ix. and x. δι' ἑαυτε, *by himself*, is wanting in some good copies.

[2] *Right hand of supreme majesty.*] So Mr. Wakefield. Or, "the majesty on high:" *i. e.* in heaven. An expression borrowed from Ps. cx. 1, and often applied to Christ to express the dignity and authority to which he is now advanced.

a degree of dignity and glory, superior to what had ever been conferred on any preceding prophet, however venerable or illustrious. Ch. I. Ver. 3.

Observe here the address of the author of this epistle, and the tenderness with which he treats the prejudices of his readers, in not immediately mentioning the name of Jesus the despised Nazarene, nor introducing the obnoxious circumstance of his crucifixion, till he had prepared their minds for it, by expressing in the strongest language the dignity of his character and office, and only obliquely hinting at his death in that view of it upon which he afterwards expatiates, and which would be most likely to reconcile the minds of the Hebrew Christians to so mortifying a subject.

This address of the writer has been misunderstood by modern interpreters, and indeed by the ancients, who were converts from heathenism, and who knew little or nothing of Jewish prejudices, customs, and modes of thinking. And those figurative expressions of the writer, which were only intended to describe the dignity of our Lord's character, and the divine energies and authority by which his mission was supported, have been strangely misapplied, as if they taught some unknown and incomprehensible emanation of the person of the Son from that of the Father, and some mysterious communication of the divine essence or substance, and participation of the divine government of the universe, which never entered into the thoughts

Ch. I. Ver. 3. either of the writer himself or of the simple Hebrew Christians to whom the epistle is addressed, and who had always been taught to believe that there is one God only, who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and all that is therein, who sustains and governs all things without an equal, a rival, or a vicegerent.

2. The writer asserts the great superiority of the Leader of this new dispensation to all former prophets and messengers of God, alluding to his resurrection from the dead, ver. 4—6.

For the explanation of the writer's argument, it is necessary to observe, that the same word in the original is sometimes translated *angel*, that is, a supposed celestial spirit, and sometimes *messenger*, and the connexion of his discourse requires that in this chapter, and the beginning of the next, it should be translated messenger, as referring to those former prophets who had been mentioned in the first verse.

In order likewise to understand the relevance of the writer's quotations, it must be remembered that in the scripture phraseology, *sonship* implies an inheritance. The Israelites were *sons* of God, and their inheritance was Canaan. Christians are also *sons*, and their inheritance is a resurrection to everlasting life. Christ is the *first-born* son, because he is the first who rose from death to immortality; and he is said to be superior to all other prophets, without excepting even Moses himself, who is principally alluded to, though, to avoid offence, not ex-

pressly named, because the Christian inheritance to which Jesus leads, and of which he is the first partaker, is infinitely superior to that of Canaan. Ch. I. Ver. 3.

It is also evident that this writer frequently quotes passages of scripture merely from the sound of the words[1], without any regard to the connexion or to the true meaning of the text; and that the arguments are often of no intrinsic value, being addressed merely to the *professed opinions*, and sometimes, it should seem, even to the *ignorance* of his readers. The writer of this epistle, whoever he was, is more of an eloquent declaimer than a judicious reasoner. Christianity is not bound to defend all her advocates: the doctrine may be, and undoubtedly is true, though some of the arguments alleged by its friends may be inconclusive, and some of its advocates injudicious.

Let us now return to the proofs which this writer produces of the superiority of the great teacher, whom he does not yet name, to all former prophets.

Being become so much greater than those messengers[2], *as he hath obtained by inheritance a more excellent name than they.* 4.

[1] *The writer quotes from the sound of words.*] "The Jews," says Dr. Priestley in his preface to this epistle, "having no other books, were always meditating upon their scriptures; which led them to apply passages in them to all occasions, proper and improper, and to draw from them arguments which will not always bear strict examination. This was perfectly natural in their circumstances; and if we had found the case to be otherwise, we should have wanted a valuable argument of the genuineness of these writings, as not suiting the men or the times."

[2] *Those messengers.*] And again ver. 5, *Unto what one* of

Ch. I. Ver. 4. Having been put into possession of the great inheritance, he has obtained the title of a son, while former prophets and messengers of God, however eminent their character, or however important their mission, were not graced with that honourable appellation.

5. *For unto what one of those messengers said* God *at any time, Thou art my son*[1], *this day have I*

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those messengers. See Sykes. *των αγγελων, those messengers:* viz. *οι προφηται*, ver. 1. This interpretation, suggested many years ago by an ingenious friend, is adopted by Mr. Wakefield in his *New Translation*. It is surprising that it was never thought of before. But the Gentile Christians from the beginning misunderstood the expressions; and the original error seems to have been propagated from age to age almost without intermission. The Hebrew Christians must, however, have understood the writer in the true sense; for it is evident that they were always strictly Unitarian. See Dr. Priestley's *Hist. of Early Opinions*, vol. iii. book iii. ch. viii.—xii. It was of great importance to establish the fact that Jesus was a prophet superior to all former prophets and messengers of God, without excepting Moses himself; who is unquestionably the person chiefly alluded to, though not yet expressly named. But of what use is it to the inhabitants of this planet to know any thing concerning the arrangement of a supposed celestial hierarchy, or to be informed that other guardian angels, who were before the colleagues of Christ, are now become his inferiors? or who that allows himself to reflect calmly and dispassionately, can suppose that a formal revelation should be made of a fact in which men are so little interested? See Peirce *in loc.*

[1] *Thou art my son.*] The second Psalm is generally understood as a prophecy of the Messiah, both by Jewish and Christian interpreters; and Mr. Peirce in his note upon this passage has given a learned and able vindication of this interpretation. Dr. Priestley, however, denies the inspiration of this Psalm, and assigns plausible arguments for his opinion. *Theol. Repository*, vol. iv. p. 98—103. "*Omnes Hebræi fatebantur, quicquid præclarum et magnum de piis hominibus et regibus Israelitarum dictum esset in Libris Vet. Test. id sensu multo eminentiore pertinere ad Messiam, a prophetis varie præfiguratum. Sic omnes*

begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son?[2] Ch. I. Ver. 5.

You recollect a passage in the second Psalm (Ps. ii. 7.) which the Jewish nation universally interpret of the Messiah: he is there called a Son; and the spirit of prophecy represents God as giving him that appellation upon a glorious occasion, which though then future is spoken of as present, and which has now actually taken place.

There is also another passage (2 Sam. vii. 14), which, though spoken by Nathan to David, of Solomon, is also applicable in a far more important sense to the Messiah, the purport of which is, I will provide a glorious inheritance for him, and will distinguish him above all his brethren, above all other prophets, teachers, and messengers.

And when he introduces the first-born again[3] *into the world, he saith*[4], *Let all the messengers of God pay homage to him.* 6.

Hebræi fatebantur, Psalmum secundum, quanquam in Davide aliquo modo impletum, sensu tamen arcano et sublimiore ad ipsum Messiam pertinere, qui supra omnes Filius Dei, dicendus sit: a Deo genitus, i. e. *ad imperium evectus. Hoc semel monuisse sufficiat.*" Rosenmuller.

[2] *I will be to him a father,* &c.] Mr. Peirce labours to prove, but I think unsatisfactorily, that this passage is also a prediction of the Messiah.

[3] *And when he introduces,* &c.] παλιν εισαγαγη κ. τ. λ., " and when he again bringeth in his first-born into the world, *i. e.* after his resurrection. Mr. Peirce observes, that " the order of the words in the original leads to this sense, and they cannot without violence offered to them bear another translation."

[4] *He saith.*] Some think that this citation is made from Deut. xxxii. 43, where the LXX. have the very words which are here quoted. But as nothing corresponding to them is found in the

Ch. I. Ver. 6. The xcviith Psalm may be understood as a pompous representation of the introduction of the Messiah's kingdom; and in ver. 7 are these words, Pay homage to him, all ye messengers of God: these being interpreted as an address to the Messiah, are an acknowledgement of his superiority to all former prophets. This call upon the messengers of God is made upon some grand public occasion when this superior prophet is inaugurated into his office. As applied to the great teacher, whose dignity and office I am now describing, it signifies that his second appearance in the world, after his temporary removal from it, was the circumstance which constitutes his great superiority over all former messengers of God.

It needs but little discernment to see how very precarious this argument is, and how entirely it depends upon his reader conceding the principles upon which it is founded. It is also made still more obscure by the unwillingness of the author as yet to introduce the offensive doctrine of the crucifixion of Jesus.

Hebrew or the Samaritan, Mr. Peirce suspects them to have been an interpolation; and with the generality of interpreters he supposes the citation to be made with a little variation of expression from Ps. xcvii. 7. That learned writer contends that the Psalm (and even the passage in Deuteronomy) refers to the time when the Gentiles would be gathered into the church, that is, to the reign of the Messiah, which commenced at the resurrection of Christ; and consequently, that the application of the prophecy by the writer of the Epistle is correct and pertinent.

3. Though former prophets are described under very honourable characters, the author of the new dispensation is entitled to superior honours, and advanced to universal dominion, ver. 7—9. Ch. I.

And concerning[1] *these messengers indeed* the scripture *saith*[2], *Who maketh his messengers winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.* Ver. 7.

Former prophets and holy men, who were commissioned to reveal the will of God to mankind, were as ready as the wind or the lightning to obey the orders of the Almighty; yet still, like those inanimate but powerful agents, they acted only in a subordinate and ministerial capacity.

This citation is made from Ps. civ. 4. The design of that beautiful and sublime ode is to celebrate the displays of the divine attributes in the works of creation and providence: the true version of the words in their original connexion is, He maketh the winds his messengers and the flames of fire his ministers. By a bold prosopopœia they represent winds and lightnings as the servants of the Almighty, and yielding obedience to his orders.

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[1] *Concerning.*] προς τους αγγελους, "*concerning* these messengers." Grotius remarks this as a peculiarity in the style of Luke. Luke xix. 20. But Hallet produces an example from the writings of Paul, Rom. viii. 31. Introd. to Peirce on Heb. p. xxxi.

[2] The scripture *saith.*] This citation and the succeeding ones are from the Septuagint version: a presumption, as some think, that the epistle was originally written in Greek. "The *scripture* saith, not *he* saith: the nominative case is not Θεος, but γραφη understood." Dr. Owen. See Bowyer.

Ch. I. Ver. 7. But this writer, citing the passage more from regard to the sound than to the sense, inverts the meaning of the psalmist, and applies the words as descriptive of the character of the former prophets and messengers of God.

8. *But concerning the son* it saith, *God* is *thy throne*[1] *for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy king-*
9. *dom is a sceptre of rectitude. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God,* even *thy God*[2]*, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy associates*[3]. Ps. xlv. 6, 7.

The xlvth Psalm, which, though originally composed to celebrate the nuptials of Solomon, is by the interpreters of our nation commonly applied to the Messiah, represents that great prophet as sustaining a character far superior to that of any of his

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[1] *God* is *thy throne.*] "*Deus ipse est sedes tua perpetua.*" Grotius. So Wakefield. Newcome adopts the common translation, "thy throne, O God;" and as those are called Gods to whom the word of God came, there is no material objection to this translation: understanding by the word of God, a prince, or a mighty, perhaps, an inspired chief. "God is the support of thy throne." Sykes.

[2] *God,* even *thy God.*] Θεος, ὁ Θεος σϑ. "The first Θεος should be inclosed between commas, being the Attic vocative, as in the preceding verse. Therefore, 'O God, thy God hath anointed thee,' &c." Mangey and Markland, *apud* Bowyer.

[3] *Associates.*] Dr. Doddridge says, "It seems to be intimated here, that as Christ took the special charge of Judea, angels were charged with the government of other countries, in reference to which they are called his fellows or companions." But I am persuaded that the author of this epistle makes no allusion whatever to the groundless notion of guardian angels. The associates here mentioned are former prophets and messengers, beings of the same nature, who, like Jesus himself, were commissioned to reveal the will of God to men.

predecessors; for while they are described as menial servants, this last and greatest prophet is represented in a regal capacity, as invested with high dignity and authority; as a just and righteous prince, who, because of the superior excellence of his character, and importance of his commission, is advanced by his Father and his God to, and powerfully supported in, a station of glory and felicity far beyond those who like him were honoured with a divine commission though in an inferior degree. Ch. I. Ver. 9.

The psalm which is here cited is applied by the Jews to the Messiah, and by Christians to Christ. Whether it be a prophecy at all, will bear a question; and how far a prophecy can be admitted as containing a double sense, is a case of exceeding great difficulty; but nothing can be argued from the use made of the prophecies by this writer, because it is plain, from the last citation, that he is satisfied with texts whose sound alone, however distant from the true meaning, is applicable to his purpose.

It is a strange interpretation which some ingenious and learned men[4] have given of this passage,

[4] *Some learned men.*] Mr. Peirce expounds the text in this manner: "Therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee to a vastly greater regal authority and power than ever belonged to the angels, who before thy inauguration were partners with thee in the government of the world." The learned author observes, in his note upon the passage, "It seems not an unreasonable supposition, that, notwithstanding their holiness and integrity, they might be liable to such mistakes as Christ was not."

But

Ch. I. Ver. 9. viz. that Jesus Christ, who had formerly been employed like other guardian angels, his equals, in superintending a particular district, had conducted himself so well in his peculiar province, that, as the reward of his merits, he was now advanced to universal dominion, and his former colleagues are made his subjects. Surely divine revelation was communicated to teach mankind something of more immediate importance than these imaginary revolutions in the celestial hierarchy. The design of the gospel is to make men wise unto salvation; and it contains no information that is not directly conducive to this purpose.

4. The writer having mentioned God as the supporter of the throne of the son, now in the language of the psalmist, Ps. cii. 25, expresses his confidence in the divine immutability as the pledge of the perpetual duration of the Messiah's kingdom, ver. 10—12.

10. *And: Thou, Lord*[1], *in the beginning hast*

But can any reflecting person seriously believe that the government of the world was ever committed to the care of imperfect and fallible beings, who, because of their incapacity, were afterwards deposed, and the forms of government changed?

[1] *Thou, Lord.*] "In Ps. cii. 25, there is no corresponding Hebrew for *thou, Lord.* Jehovah must be supplied from ver. 21, 22, or God from ver. 24." Newcome. The words however are found in the LXX. and were probably dropped by negligence from the Hebrew copies. The immutability of God is here declared as a pledge of the immutability of the kingdom of Christ. "To show," says Emlyn (*Works*, vol. ii. p. 340), "how able his God who had anointed him was, to make good and maintain what he had granted him, a durable kingdom

founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They will perish, but thou remainest[2]; *they will decay altogether like a garment, and like a mantle*[3] *thou wilt fold them up, and they will be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years will not fail.* Ch. I. Ver. 11. 12.

This sublime description of the eternity, the immutability, and the almighty power of God, in which the devout psalmist represents the supreme Being as remaining unchangeable in all the glory of his attributes from age to age, while at his pleasure worlds and systems rise and disappear in long succession, and the splendid firmament itself is folded up and laid aside like a robe, inspires a joyful assurance that the kingdom of his son, supported by the arm of his omnipotence, shall bear down all opposition, and shall endure to the end of time.

These words are, by readers whose minds are biassed by popular prejudice, supposed to be addressed to Christ; but there is nothing in the connexion which necessarily leads to this conclusion. As they stand in the hundred and second Psalm they are evidently addressed to God; and a Jew, writing to his countrymen, would never presume to

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for ever and ever." See Lindsey's *Sequel to his Apology*, p. 488.

[2] *Thou remainest.*] or, thou shalt remain. See Peirce and Macknight. διαμενεις. "thou wilt endure throughout." Wakefield.

[3] *A mantle.*] περιβολαιον, "an upper garment or cloak." Beza understands it of the covering of a tent.

Ch. I. Ver. 12. hold that language concerning a prophet, however dignified, which in their sacred writings was uniformly appropriated to the Deity.

5. It was the commission of former prophets not to establish the new dispensation, but to prepare the way for it, ver. 13, 14.

13. *Moreover, to which of those messengers hath he ever said, Sit thou at my right hand until I make*
14. *thine enemies thy footstool*[1]*? Are they not all servants* swift as *winds*[2]*, sent forth upon their mini-*

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[1] *Thine enemies thy footstool?*] Dr. Macknight observes, that "the eastern princes used to tread upon the necks of their vanquished enemies, in token of their utter subjection, Josh. x. 24. And some of the more haughty ones, in mounting their horses, used them as a footstool."

[2] *Servants* swift as *winds.*] λειτουργικα πνευματα, *ministering winds.* See ver. 7. The writer probably alludes to the comparison he had just made, and means to represent all former prophets as eager in their inferior and menial stations to obey the orders of their sovereign, to wait upon the future heirs of salvation, *i. e.* to deliver those prophecies of the Messiah which would induce those who came after them to receive the gospel.

Our translation uses the phrase *ministering spirits,* which immediately leads the English reader to conceive of angels in this connexion as incorporeal beings. That the words will bear this sense cannot be denied; but there is no reason to suppose that the word πνευματα is used here in a different sense from that in which it is used in the context. Mr. Peirce, in his Note, endeavours to accommodate the passage to his own strange hypothesis of a revolution in the celestial hierarchy. He allows, however, that the presumption is in favour of the translation *ministering winds.*

But even admitting that "ministering spirits" is the true translation, it would not follow that angels were alluded to. In the Hebrew idiom a man's spirit means *himself,* viz. 2 Tim. iv. 22. "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit," *i. e.* with thee. Compare Philem. ver. 25, 1 Cor. ii. 11. "Are they not

stry for the sake of those who were to be the heirs[3] *of salvation?* Ch. I. Ver. 14.

In the hundred and tenth Psalm Jehovah is introduced as addressing a highly exalted person, whom the psalmist calls "his lord" in these remarkable words, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This we all agree[4] to apply to the Messiah, and to be prophetic of his high dignity and ultimate universal authority and dominion. But do you find any passage in the Jewish scriptures in which this language, or any thing like it, is addressed to any other prophet? Are they styled lords? are they at the right hand of God? are they promised universal empire? No: their office, however honourable and important, was of a humbler nature. They were only servants under the divine controul, swift as the winds to obey the orders they received. Their office was indeed honourable, though secondary and inferior to that of the Son. They were harbingers of the Messiah's kingdom, who by their predictions of his advent, and of the nature and extent of the authority which he was to exercise, prepared the minds of men for

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all ministering spirits?" is therefore no more than if the writer had said, "are they not all *ministers?*"

[3] *Who were to be heirs.*] "for the sake of those who should afterward belong to the Christian church." Peirce; who observes that the writer only speaks here "of professed Christians, enjoying the gospel, and the subjects of Christ's visible kingdom and church on earth."

[4] *This we agree.*] See Grotius and Whitby. The latter proves by many testimonies that the Jewish writers interpret this Psalm of the Messiah.

Ch. I. Ver. 14. the reception of his doctrine, and supplied the most satisfactory proofs of the divinity of his mission. Thus the former prophets were appointed by God to be the instructors and the guides of those who were then to be, and who now are, by their instrumentality, the disciples of this new dispensation, and partakers of its inestimable benefits.

6. From the pre-eminence of this new and glorious teacher he infers the superior regard due to the dispensation introduced by him. Ch. ii. 1—4.

Ch. II. Ver. 1. *For this cause we ought to give the more earnest attention to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we let* them *escape*[1].

The superior dignity of the teacher requires superior attention to the doctrine, which we may be sure is of proportionably greater importance, and most worthy of being received and remembered by us.

2. *For if the doctrine delivered by messengers*[2] *was*

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[1] *Let* them *escape.*] παραρυωμεν, *run out as leaking vessels.* The word means that we should not let what we have heard *slip by* us, or *run out*, through any negligence or carelessness.—"The figure is taken from water, which easily flows by one if it be not stopped, and by that means kept." Sykes. "*ne quando præterfluere ea sinamus.*" Bos.

[2] *Messengers.*] αγγελοις, by former prophets, as in the context, commonly interpreted *angels*, and Whitby has a learned note to establish this sense of the word. We know that prophets and messengers, viz. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, &c., were employed at the giving out of the law from Sinai (see Exod. xxiv. 12); but that any celestial created spirits were concerned in it we have no satisfactory evidence.

of such authority that[3] *every transgression and dis-* Ch. II.
obedience received a just retribution, how shall we Ver. 3.
escape if we neglect so great a salvation[4], *which having been first published by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those that heard* him[5], *God at* 4.
the same time bearing testimony by signs and wonders[6], *and various mighty works, and distributions of the holy spirit, according to his own will?*

This new dispensation cannot be neglected with impunity: for, consider with yourselves, if the legal dispensation which was introduced by messengers and servants, and the dignity and importance of

[3] *Was of such authority that,* &c.] So Wakefield. βεβαιος, "stedfast, and every transgression," &c. Newcome, according to the construction of the original. "The threats denounced in the law were all put in execution exactly and rigidly, *i. e.* in the wilderness." Sykes.

[4] *Salvation.*] *i. e.* deliverance in general, whether from the bondage of the law, or from the yoke of idolatry and vice. See Tit. iii. 5. It is not necessary to suppose that eternal life and happiness is here intended. Archbishop Newcome explains it of "the doctrine and the means of salvation proposed by such high authority."

[5] *By those that heard* him.] From this expression Grotius infers that this epistle was not written by an apostle, but by some disciple of the apostles, such as Luke, to whom he inclines to ascribe it. It is, to say the least, a strong presumption that Paul was not the author; for he always expressly disavows having learned the Christian doctrine from men, even though they were apostles, and affirms that he learned it from Christ alone. See Gal. i. 11. He never would have used the language which occurs here without some qualification.

[6] *Signs and wonders,* &c.] It is not easy, nor is it material, to know the distinctions of the miraculous powers here mentioned. Peirce has an excellent note upon the passage. "Some," says Archbishop Newcome, "distinguish thus: that σημειον is a miracle wrought as a sign; τερας, one wrought on inanimate nature; and δυναμις, one wrought on animate nature."

Ch. II. Ver. 4. which must have been far inferior to that to which I now allude, was so strongly enforced, that condign punishment, without mitigation or reprieve, was inflicted upon the voluntary offender, can we in similar circumstances hope for mercy? Can we expect to escape the most distressing consequences if we reject a dispensation of so much greater value, which was first published by the glorious personage of whom the prophets were the harbingers, which was further taught and explained to us by his messengers, who learned it from his lips, and whose doctrine was attested in the most solemn and convincing manner by those miracles which God enabled them to perform, and by those miraculous powers which he authorized them in various instances to communicate to their disciples. Let not any one think that the rejection of this divine institution is a matter of little consequence; or, that a doctrine introduced into the world with this splendour of miracles may be opposed, abandoned, or even neglected, without the utmost hazard.

SECTION II.

THE WRITER argues, from a variety of considerations, that the nature of the Christian dispensation required that the first teacher of it should be not an angel, or a celestial spirit, but a suffering man.—Ch. ii. 5—18.

1. He affirms that the Christian dispensation

was not committed to the direction of angels, Ch. II.
ver. 5.

Moreover, unto angels[1] (*God*) *hath not com-* Ver. 5.

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[1] *Moreover, unto angels.*] *Moreover*, γαρ, introducing, not an inference, but a collateral remark. The author enters upon a new subject: having proved that the founder of the new dispensation was superior to all former prophets and messengers of God, he now sets himself to prove that, exalted as he is in dignity, he is nevertheless in nature inferior to angels; and is in this respect altogether similar to his brethren. "*Angels:*" so Wakefield. Here the connexion requires that the word which in the preceding section means *human beings, messengers of God*, should now be taken in the sense of *celestial spirits*; such as angels are supposed to be. This change in the signification of a word, without giving notice of it, though a great fault in composition, is not out of character in our author, who writes rhetorically rather than logically; and often takes the liberty of playing upon his words. In ver. 7 of the first chapter, he uses the words in a sense totally different from their original meaning as they stand in the civth Psalm. And if the common interpretation be correct, he changes the sense of πνευμα in ver. 14, from the sense in which he uses it ver. 7, without giving any notice of the alteration.

It is not often that a writer sets himself to prove, that a human being *is* a human being, and nothing more than a human being. But this writer, as though he were aware that the lofty expressions which he had used were liable to be misunderstood, endeavours to guard his readers against this misconception by stating in the most explicit terms, that by all he had said concerning the dignity of the Founder of the new covenant, and his superiority to the angels or prophets of the old dispensation, he never intended to represent him as superior to angels or celestial beings; for as it had been foretold of him that he should be inferior to angels, so in fact it was indispensably requisite to the accomplishment of the object of his mission, that he should be a proper human being in every respect similar to those whom he came to redeem from vice and misery; and not only so, but that he should also be a sufferer and a victim previously to his advancement to his kingdom and glory.

Such were the pains which the sacred writers took, and this writer in particular, to impress upon their readers a correct judgement concerning the person of their Master, and to pre-

Ch. II. Ver. 5. *mitted the world to come*[1], *concerning which we speak.*

The prophets of God, who are called his angels, or messengers, were employed by him to conduct the Jewish dispensation, sanctioned by temporal promises and threatenings, in its origin, and through the various stages of its progress; and I have just been proving to you, by arguments the most conclusive, that the great prophet of the new dispensation is superior to them all, as a son to a servant, as a master to his emissaries and messengers. You are not, however, from the ambiguity, or from the strength of language which I have used, to draw conclusions which were not designed, nor to infer that the person of whom I have been discoursing

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vent their figurative expressions from being misunderstood. Yet such was the shame and scandal of the cross, and the dread of being exposed to scorn as the disciples of the crucified Nazarene, that in the very age of the apostles, and in defiance of the plainest language of the New Testament, men began to introduce those corrupt opinions concerning Christ, which gradually grew up to the deification of his person, and ultimately to the monstrous doctrine of a Triune God; which for fifteen centuries has been the belief and the disgrace of the apostate church.

[1] *The world to come.*] οικουμενην μελλουσαν. It is agreed among critics, that the Christian dispensation is here intended; but why called οικουμενην μελλουσαν, *the future inhabited world?* Some think because it is styled a new creation, Isa. lxv. 17; others represent the expression as synonymous with αιων, and render it *the succeeding age*; the temple being standing when this epistle was written. See Newcome's *Translation.* Dr. Macknight and others suppose the writer to allude to the object of the divine promise under the Christian dispensation, namely, a future life, as distinguished from the promise of the Mosaic covenant, which was only the earthly Canaan.

is a being of a nature superior to man. The reverse is true. For though the dispensation which I have described, and which has been introduced in the awful and magnificent manner which you have heard, is a dispensation greatly superior to any which preceded it, and is enforced by the momentous sanctions of a future life, yet I can assure you that the direction of it is not committed to celestial and angelic beings, but that the illustrious founder and teacher of it is a mere human being, a man like ourselves. Ch. II. Ver. 5.

2. The writer further remarks, that certain circumstances are foretold concerning the Messiah in the book of Psalms, one of which still remains unfulfilled, while the others have received their accomplishment in the person of Jesus, ver. 6—9.

But a certain writer[2] *hath somewhere testified,* 6.
saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or any son of man[3] *that thou regardest him?*
Thou madest him a little lower[4] *than the angels*[5], 7.

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[2] *A certain* writer.] I cannot think that Mr. Peirce, notwithstanding all the learning and ingenuity which he has exercised upon the subject, has by any means proved, in a satisfactory manner, that the eighth Psalm was a prophecy of Christ. This is one instance among many of the very loose manner of quoting and applying scripture so familiar to the writer of this epistle, and probably to the Jews of his time.

[3] *Man, or any son of man.*] See Wakefield.

[4] *A little lower.*] βραχυ τι. Peirce and many others observe that this expression may be translated, "for a short time;" which translation best accommodates the Arian hypothesis; but the common translation is equally correct, and bet-

Ch. II. *thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and thou hast set him over the works of thy hands*[1].

Ver. 8. *Thou hast subjected all things under his feet. Now in thus subjecting all things to him, he hath left nothing* that is *not subjected to him*[2].

This quotation from Psalm viii. 4—6 may be understood as prophetic of some illustrious person who is to be appointed universal governor, and to whose authority all things without exception are to be made subject.

—8. *But now we do not yet see that all things are subjected to him.*

There is no person who has yet appeared to whom this part of the prophecy can apply; and therefore it is not from this circumstance that we can discover the illustrious object of it. But there is one, a distinguished character to whom I have all along alluded, and whom I shall immediately

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ter adapted to the original Psalm: there is, therefore, no reason to alter it. See Sykes.

[5] *Angels.*] The original word is Elohim, *gods;* and probably means to express beings of an order superior to mankind. It never signifies *messengers,* which is the primary sense of the word (מלאך) that is commonly translated *angel.*

[1] *And thou hast set him over the works of thy hands.*] This clause is wanting in the Clermont and Corbey and in many other ancient manuscripts, and likewise in the Syriac version; but it is found both in the Hebrew and the LXX., and is probably genuine.

[2] *He hath left nothing,* &c.] The apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 27, applies the same text to the dominion of Christ: hence some have concluded that Paul was the author of this epistle; but this is precarious. The apostle's inference is different, viz. it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him.

name, in whom the first part of the prophecy hath received its proper accomplishment; and in whom, without doubt, the last and the most glorious part will in due time be amply verified. Ch. II. Ver. 8.

But we see Jesus[3], *who was made a little lower than angels, that he, by the gratuitous goodness of God, might taste death for every man, for the suffering of death*[4] *crowned with glory and honour.* 9.

The person whom I mean is Jesus, the head of the new dispensation; a name by many despised and abhorred; but to you, I trust, dear and venerable. He is the master that we serve, the founder of our faith, greatly pre-eminent over all former prophets and teachers. Not indeed in his nature; for he like them is inferior to angels; and it was fit he should, for he was destined to be a sufferer;

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[3] *We see Jesus.*] Observe here, that this is the first mention of the name of Jesus, which the author does not introduce till he has raised in the minds of the Hebrew Christians the highest ideas of his office and character; and though it is necessary to mention his sufferings, he does it in the slightest manner, it is only tasting death; which he represents at the same time as an event fraught with the most beneficial consequences to all mankind, as the result of the free goodness of God, and as immediately connected with and crowned by his advancement to the highest dignity and honour. This caution of the writer in introducing the name of Jesus has escaped the notice of most expositors. He seems to have intended the epistle for the inspection of the unconverted, as well as the converted Hebrews; and the fear of hurting the prejudices of the Jews, shows that the writer was educated in the school of Paul. See Peirce on ver. 11.

[4] *For the suffering of death.*] The hyperbaton in this verse is noticed by all the critics.

Ch. II. Ver. 9. and, by the free goodness of God, he was, for the benefit of all mankind, delivered up to a temporary death. But this event was so far from being disgraceful to him, or to his cause, that by his resurrection from the grave and ascension to the right hand of God, which was the reward of his voluntary sufferings, he is advanced to greater dignity and honour than any human being before him ever attained, which plainly points him out as the proper object of the remarkable prophecy which I have just cited, and as destined in the divine councils to be the future lord and governor of all things.

Upon this paragraph we may observe, 1. That this passage makes it probable that the epistle was written, if not by Paul himself, yet by one of the companions or hearers of that apostle: for the same prophecy is quoted with the same view, 1 Cor. xv. 25—27.

2. The eighth Psalm does not appear to have any peculiar claim to be regarded as prophetic of the Messiah. It is a poetical composition which beautifully expresses the condescension and goodness of the divine Being in the formation of man, and in the dominion granted to him over the inferior creatures. This therefore is an additional instance of quotation by accommodation from the Old Testament, so familiar with this writer, and with the Jews in his time.

3. The word Elohim, which in this Psalm is translated *angel*, is not the same with that which

is usually so translated, and it never signifies a messenger. It is commonly rendered God, or Gods, and it expresses the dignity of the human race, as being little inferior to celestial spirits. The writer here applies the expression to Jesus in the same sense, and means thereby to show that he was not an angel but a man. He insinuates that it was requisite that he should be a man, that he might be liable to death, of which, if he had been a celestial spirit, he would not have been susceptible. He was inferior to angels that he might taste of death. Ch. II. Ver. 9.

4. *He tasted death for every man*, i. e. all were benefited by his death, which sealed a new and universal covenant, in which all mankind were parties. This is explained hereafter: at present, for the purpose of softening the prejudices of the Hebrews, it is just alluded to as the result of the merciful appointment of God. He did but taste of death: he saw no corruption: he was raised on the third day, before any change took place; and the reproach was obliterated almost as soon as it began.

5. The parts of the prophecy which are represented as actually fulfilled are, First, that he was made lower than the angels, a mortal man, who by divine appointment suffered death. Second, that he is now advanced to glory and honour, that is, raised from the dead and exalted at the right hand of God.

6. One part of the prophecy remained unfulfilled. "We do not yet see all things put under him."

Ch. II. Ver. 9. Nor do we, who live at the distance of seventeen centuries, yet see this prediction completely verified. But if there be truth in prophecy, the religion of Jesus will eventually become the religion of the world. The doctrine of the cross will ultimately bear down all opposition; and those events which, to our limited apprehensions, appear most hostile to its progress, will in the end appear to have been essential parts of the wise and mysterious plan of Providence, and subservient to the ultimate and universal triumph of the Christian cause.

3. That there was an expediency in appointing that the Saviour of men should be a sufferer, ver. 10.

10. *For it became him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, to make the leader of many sons* [1] *to glory, even the captain of their salvation, perfect through sufferings* [2].

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[1] *The leader of many sons.*] Wakefield. εις δοξαν αγαγοντα· "It is not God that is here said to be bringing many sons to glory, for then it would have been in natural construction αγαγοντι, not αγαγοντα, but it is the Captain of their Salvation who was to bring many sons to glory. The sense of the place is, It became the goodness and wisdom of God to make his Son, who was to bring many sons to glory,—sons, who were to go through many sufferings in this life,—to make his Son, I say, an example to them to bear sufferings, to encourage them to persevere steady and immovable, till they obtained the reward of their sufferings." Sykes.

[2] *To make perfect through sufferings.*] "τελειωσαι, *to bring to an end, to finish, to perfect:* the possession of his kingdom was the perfection of our Leader." Sykes. Dr. Doddridge approaches nearer to the true meaning of the author: "It became him, &c. to make the leader of salvation completely fit

You might naturally expect, like the rest of your nation, that the great deliverer would appear as a prince and a conqueror; whereas it is evident, as I have just observed, that the honour to which Jesus is advanced was attained by the suffering of death: and, however contrary the event may prove to our views and hopes, there can be no doubt, that the glorious Being who is the first cause and the last end of all, and by whose councils the whole plan of man's salvation is conducted, had the wisest and the best reasons for what he has chosen to bring to pass. And we may be assured that no better way could be devised for executing his gracious purpose, than by appointing him, who was ordained to conduct multitudes of the sons of God to glory and felicity, and to be himself the first who should take possession of it as their pattern and forerunner, to become qualified and completed for this high and sacred office, and as it were consecrated to it, by passing through a previous scene of suffering and death. Some of the most obvious reasons for this appointment I shall proceed to state. Ch. II. Ver. 10.

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for the full execution of his office by a long train of sufferings, whereby he was, as it were, solemnly consecrated to it." There can be no doubt that this is the sense in which the word τελειοω, *to make perfect*, is used in this epistle (see ch. vii. 28), and this sense, as Peirce observes, is confirmed by the words which immediately follow. See ver. 11.

"I would observe," says Dr. Priestley, "that all that follows in this chapter has no other object, and he never could have written it with any other idea, than that of Christ being as much a man as any of his followers who bore the Christian name."

Ch. II. Ver. 10.

4. This glorious leader and his followers are all equally the spiritual descendants of Abraham, ver. 11—13.

11. *For both he who sanctifieth*[1], *and they who are sanctified, are all*[2] *of one* Father[3]; *for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.*

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[1] *He who sanctifieth*] "is he that puts persons into a separate state from others in respect to God; and they that are sanctified ought to live up to the relation they stand in to God." Sykes.

[2] *Are all.*] Peirce thinks that by the use of the universal term *all*, the writer means to allude in a manner as inoffensive as possible to the conversion of the Gentiles.

[3] *Of one* Father.] εξ ἑνος. The original is elliptical: some supply the ellipsis with the word *God*, ver. 9. "The sanctifier Christ, and the sanctified, his disciples, are all of one Father, God." Newcome. So Sykes. "all of one family; all the descendants of Adam, and in a sense the seed of Abraham." Doddridge. "Εξ ἑνος sc. αἱματος, vel σπερματος, vel γενες. *Omnes eandem habent, vel habere debebant naturam: quam interpretationem sequentia confirmant. cap.* v. 1. *Conveniens erat auctorem salutis humanæ non esse angelum, sed humana natura præditum.*" Rosenmuller. "All of them are of one father Abraham—the father of the faithful, the great pattern of believing." Peirce. This is the interpretation adopted in the paraphrase, but I am doubtful whether that of Rosenmuller does not better suit the connexion. "They are all," says Dr. Whitby, "of one original and nature." It is the professed design of the writer in this section to show that the founder of the new dispensation, though far superior in rank to all preceding prophets, was nevertheless a human being in the proper sense of the word, and nothing more than such. As such, he acknowledges that he is not ashamed to call his disciples his brethren; that like them he is dependent upon the protection of God, to whom he is to give an account of his mission, and to present at the throne of God those who through divine mercy have been saved by him, his children, his beloved disciples, who are also beings of the same order and nature with himself. After which, the writer proceeds to show how necessary it was that he who came to save from the curse of the law should himself be a man like his brethren subject to the law.

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This illustrious teacher, who sanctifies his disciples and separates them from the unbelieving world, as a people consecrated to God, and they who are thus consecrated by him, are all of them sons of God, the common parent of mankind, they are all beings of the same species, partakers of the same common nature, and are all the children of Abraham the holy patriarch, who is renowned for the confidence which he placed in the promises of God. He does not therefore assume any superiority over his faithful disciples; but though honoured with such an important mission he represents himself as their brother in rank, and their companion in tribulation, equally with them depending upon and confiding in the promises of God, to whom all his success was owing. Ch. II. Ver. 11.

Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren[4], *in the midst of the assembly I will celebrate thy praise.* 12.

This is the language which David, in the twenty-second Psalm, ver. 22, puts into the mouth of that holy person who is the object of this prophecy, and

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It may be remarked that this writer, who so explicitly asserts the proper humanity of Christ, makes no reserve, puts in no salvo in favour of a superior and divine nature which was not subject to these humiliations. In truth, he had no idea of any such distinction. The fable of two distinct natures existing in one person was not then invented.

[4] *To my brethren.*] "The passage here cited," says Peirce, "is taken from Ps. xxii. 22; and the whole Psalm seems to me to belong entirely and solely to Christ. That he was not ashamed to call his disciples *brethren,* we learn from John xx. 17, Matt. xxv. 40, xxviii. 10."

Ch. II. Ver. 12. who is the same that we now call our master; and who thus condescends to speak of his faithful disciples as his brethren.

13. *And again, I will continue to put my trust in him. And again*[1], *Behold I, and the children whom God hath given me*[2].

The same conclusion may be drawn from a passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, ch. viii. 17, 18; where a great teacher predicted under the name of Immanuel, who is the person of whom I am speaking, the head of the new dispensation, declares his resolution to place his confidence in God under great difficulties and trials; and thus approves himself a genuine son of Abraham: and as he immediately speaks of his disciples as children given to him by God, they likewise are with him the spiritual de-

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[1] *And again.*] The two clauses here cited stand together in Isaiah viii. 17, 18; but being cited as separate testimonies, it has been conjectured that the writer takes the former from Psalm xviii. 2, or 2 Sam. xxii. 3. See Peirce and Sykes *in loc.* But it seems equally probable that the words και παλιν have been repeated from the first clause, by the inadvertence of some early transcriber. This was the opinion of Wall. See Bowyer.

[2] *Behold I,* &c.] This is language which, according to the interpretation of Mr. Peirce and Mr. Dodson, the prophet puts into the mouth of Immanuel, or the Messiah. It seems to be introduced here to show that the Messiah was the heir of Abraham's faith; and that believers, being his spiritual children, were together with him the spiritual descendants of Abraham. See Peirce *in loc.* and Dodson on Isa. viii. 17. "The argument," says Peirce, "stands thus: All that believe in God, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, are children of Abraham. Christ, as appears by this testimony, believed in God; consequently he must himself be a son of Abraham; and all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, must be his brethren."

scendants of the believing patriarch, and heirs of the promise. Ch. II. Ver. 13.

In this way does the author represent to the believing Hebrews that the great leader of the Christian faith was, and that it was foretold that he would be, like their renowned ancestor, eminent for his firm and cheerful reliance upon God in seasons of great difficulty and trial, and thus he gradually reconciles their minds to the acknowledgement of a suffering Messiah.

5. As he came to deliver men, and not angels, from the curse of the law and the fear of death, it was necessary that he should be a man and not an angel, ver. 14—16.

Inasmuch then as these children partook in common of flesh and blood, he also in the very same manner participated[3] *in the same, that through death he might destroy*[4] *him who hath the power of death, that is, the devil*[5], *and might deliver those* 14. 15.

[3] *In the very same manner participated.*] παραπλησιως μετεσχε. The expression in the public version, "took part" of the same, seems to imply that the participation of human nature was, in Jesus, a voluntary act; an idea which the original by no means conveys. Mr. Peirce well observes, that the word παραπλησιως does not here import 'a faint likeness,' or 'resemblance,' but 'a proper and exact conformity;' he partook of flesh and blood as completely as the children do."

[4] *Destroy.*] καταργηση. The word properly signifies to *render ineffectual.* Rom. iii. 31. See Dr. Macknight. It might have been rendered, *to defeat, to bring to nought.* 1 Cor. i. 28, ii. 6, xv. 24. See Peirce.

[5] *That is, the devil.*] Some have thought that the devil is

Ch. II. Ver. 16. *who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to slavery. For it layeth not hold of angels*[1], *but it layeth hold of the posterity of Abraham.*

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said to have the power of death, because he is the inflicter of death; a power which Mr. Peirce, who is willing to attribute it to him to a certain extent, justly thinks ought not to be attributed to him universally. But, in fact, what evidence is there that he possesses it in the least degree? Peirce himself, and many others, understand the expression as an allusion to his having tempted our first parents in paradise, and thereby bringing death upon themselves and their posterity; an assumption for which the account of the Fall lays no foundation. But what inference is too incredible or too formidable, if the fact be once admitted, that a being such as the devil is commonly described to be, shares with the Supreme in the government of the universe?

The devil, which is sometimes a personification of the principle of evil, is, in this passage, probably put for the accusing and condemning power, that is, THE LAW, which accuses, convicts, and passes a sentence of condemnation upon all who are subject to its authority, and who break its commands; and might well fill the hearts of all who are amenable to its tribunal with dismay. It is the law which thus possesses the power of death, and which being abolished by the death of Christ, all who believe in him are released from its condemning sentence, and emancipated from the fear of death.

For this interpretation, which appears to me to remove all difficulties from a very obscure text, I am indebted to the late Samuel Prime, Esq. of Whitton, whose zeal in biblical research was only equalled by his enlightened liberality in the diffusion of Christian knowledge.

[1] *It layeth not hold of angels:*] *i. e.* the fear of death. This interpretation is advanced by the late Rev. John Palmer of Macclesfield, and ingeniously and learnedly supported by him in the *Theological Repository*, vol. v. p. 161. It is greatly to be preferred to that of Sykes, Peirce, Newcome, and others; viz. "For indeed he, *i. e.* Christ, helpeth not angels." The text as it stands in the public version, "Verily he took not on him *the nature* of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham," is a lamentable proof how much King James's translators were misled by their prejudices. Perhaps the words might

Ch. II. Ver. 16.

The great object to be accomplished by the mission of Christ was to deliver his brethren the children of Abraham from the fear of death; a fear which in some persons, and in some circumstances, is so prevalent as to take away all comfort and to make life itself a burden.

This is a fear to which angels and beings of a superior order are not exposed, not being liable to mortality; but it is in a peculiar degree incident to the descendants of Abraham, who are not only, as men, subject to the universal law of death, but who are also placed under a law which pronounces sentence upon every transgressor, without remission, exposing to a fearful and unknown doom every one who falls short of sinless obedience.

It was therefore expedient that he who was commissioned to deliver his brethren from the curse of the law, should be, not an angel, or a being of superior order, who could feel no true sympathy with their condition; but a proper human being, in every respect like themselves, not only as a man, but as one of the posterity of Abraham, born under the

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be rendered thus: He, *i. e.* the devil, the accusing power, layeth not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham. This would keep up the spirit of the allegory. And this interpretation would supply a very obvious answer to Dr. Sykes's just and pertinent question: "Why should it be said that Christ came to help the seed of Abraham, and not the seed of Adam?" The true answer to which is: That it was the posterity of Abraham *only*, who, living under the dominion of the law, were subject to its accusation, and whose lives became a burden to them in consequence of that sentence of condemnation of which they were apprized, and from which they could not escape.

Ch. II. Ver. 16. law, exposed to the weaknesses and fears of human nature, and who himself suffered the penalty of the law.

Not indeed as a transgressor, for his obedience was perfect, but with a nobler purpose; that by death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. Do not mistake me: do not imagine that Jesus died to exterminate some evil spirit who possesses power to increase the agonies of death. No such mischievous being exists in the works of God. The devil which Christ abolished by his death, was the accusing and condemning power, the law itself, which with relentless severity pronounced sentence upon transgressors, and thus possessed the dreadful power of adding horror to the horrors of death. But the death of Christ, which sealed the covenant of pardon and peace, has put an end to the law, and disarmed death of its terrors.

We see here with what caution and ingenuity the sacred writer insinuates to the believing Hebrews that most offensive of all doctrines, that the law having answered its purpose is now completely abolished, and that believers under the new covenant are no longer subject to its yoke.

6. A complete resemblance to his brethren was requisite to inspire the leader of the new dispensation with sympathy, and to qualify him for the office of high-priest, ver. 17, 18.

So that it was right[1] *for him in all things to be like to his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest*[2] *in things relating to God, in order to propitiate the sins of the people*[3].

Ch. II. Ver. 17.

It was quite necessary that this great deliverer should be in every circumstance similar to his brethren, both as to his being a real man, and subject to the dominion of the law; for without this he

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[1] *It was right.*] See Wakefield's translation.

[2] *A merciful and faithful high-priest.*] This is the first mention of Jesus Christ as a high-priest, upon which character the writer afterwards expatiates at large. He is merciful and faithful, ελεημων και πιστος, *i. e.* the high-priest of a dispensation in which *mercy* is promised to *faith*, as distinguished from *works*, which were required by the law, on the failure of which it pronounces a sentence of condemnation.

[3] *To propitiate the sins of the people.*] Not εις το ιλασκεσθαι περι των αμαρτιων, not, as is commonly rendered, *to propitiate*, or "*make reconciliation* FOR the sins of the people," but to *propitiate* or *reconcile* the sins themselves. Mr. Peirce, who admits this to be the literal interpretation, says "there is no sense in it." But if it be interpreted as a prosopopœia, the sins, the accusing powers, which clamour for punishment, may be quieted, appeased, silenced, by the dispensation of the gospel, as the law, the condemning power, is abolished by it.

Dr. Sykes also observes, "The form of expression here is quite unusual: ιλασκεσθαι Θεον, or περι αμαρτιων, *to appease God*, or *to appease God on account of sins*, is frequent; but the expression here used, *to reconcile sins*, or *appease sins*, is something very particular." He well explains it, that "Christ, as a high-priest, did his part that our sins might be passed over, and not brought to account." Had it occurred to these learned writers to consider sins in this connexion as a personification of the accusing power, as prosecutors invoking the penalty of the law, the construction of the language would have been easily explained.

The meaning probably is, to remove all legal obstructions and disqualifications, so that those who were excluded as sinners from the privileges of the old covenant might be admitted to the benefits of the new dispensation, and might be called and made *holy*.

Ch. II. Ver. 17. would not have been duly qualified to exercise that office which he now sustains, and upon which I shall presently expatiate more at large, namely that of a high-priest, under a dispensation which proclaims mercy to those who believe: under which character he conducts the Christian dispensation as one grand act of temple worship; and thus he silences the clamours of sin, invoking vengeance and condemnation, as he abolishes the law which passes the sentence of death.

This I believe to be the true meaning of the writer, whose words are not that he propitiates God for the sins of men, but that he propitiates the sins themselves. Having in the preceding sentence personified the law as the condemning power whose sentence aggravated the terrors of death, but which was abolished by Christ, he now personifies the sins of transgressors as accusing powers, which were not utterly destroyed like the law, but which were silenced and pacified by that dispensation of grace, to the ministration of which Christ was consecrated by his death, and which proclaimed *mercy* to those who *believed*. On which account Christ is called a *merciful* and *faithful* high-priest; or a high-priest of that dispensation which requires faith as the condition of mercy.

18. *For wherein he hath suffered being tried, he is able to help*[1] *those who are under trial.*

[1] *Able to help.*] βοηθησαι "means *to encourage, to strengthen,* not by any supernatural aid, but by the example which Christ

If it was an angel that suffered and not a man, or if he suffered as some think only in appearance, his instructions would lose their effect, and his example would be of no use; for the cases of the teacher and the disciple would be totally dissimilar: but just in the degree in which he has suffered he can benefit his fellow sufferers. Since, therefore, he was a man like ourselves, who had all the frailties, all the feelings, and all the fears of a human being, and who suffered all the pains which any other man in the same circumstances would have endured, and since, by the exercise of faith and resignation, he triumphed over the fear of death, and was in due time raised from the grave, his doctrine and example may now be of the most essential benefit to his fellow sufferers, both as it teaches them to bear affliction of every kind with dignity and fortitude, and as it enables them to triumph over death in its most terrible aspect, by exciting the assured and glorious hope, that because he lives they shall live also. Ch. II. Ver. 18.

SECTION III.

THE WRITER briefly touches upon the superiority of Jesus to Moses. Ch. iii. 1—6. Ch. III.

The writer of this epistle having, ch. i., stated

himself exhibited of suffering in the cause of truth and of God." *Theolog. Repos.* vol. v. p. 165.

Ch. III. the great superiority of the founder of the new dispensation to all former prophets and teachers, and having, ch. ii., proved that in order to accomplish the purposes of his mission it was necessary that he should be not an angelic being, but a frail and suffering man, advances now to assert the superiority of Jesus to Moses. Upon a subject so delicate and so unacceptable to the prejudices of his countrymen he touches with great tenderness and brevity, and the train of his argument stands thus:

Believers in the gospel constitute one great family, ver. 2, 6, of which the father and ruler is God, ver. 4. To this family Moses in his place was a faithful servant, the Mosaic institute being intended to prefigure and attest the Christian dispensation, ver. 5. Whereas Jesus is a son in the same family, appointed by the Father to rule over the whole household, ver. 6.

With this general key to the author's meaning it will be easy to interpret particular expressions.

1. He calls upon the believing Hebrews to consider the perfect resemblance between the fidelity of Jesus and that of Moses, ver. 1, 2.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore, holy brethren*[1], *partakers of the heavenly calling, consider attentively this apostle and*
2. *high-priest*[2] *of our profession, Jesus*[3], *who was*

[1] *Holy brethren.*] See Peirce on the text, who recollects no other instance in which Christians are directly addressed under this character, and supposes an allusion to ch. ii. 11.

[2] *High-priest.*] As an apostle, or divine messenger, he was superior to Moses; as a high-priest, he excelled Aaron.

faithful to him who appointed him[4], *as Moses also was, in all the family* of God[5]. Ch. III. Ver. 2.

My beloved fellow worshipers, children of the same father, brethren of the same deliverer, separated by your faith in him from the unbelieving world, and consecrated to the service of God; who have wisely accepted the invitation of the gospel, and have been admitted to participate in its divine privileges and exalted hopes, reflect seriously upon the facts which I have just stated. Meditate upon the conduct of Jesus our master, the authorized teacher, the great high-priest of that new dispensation into which we are introduced; remember that he was a frail suffering mortal man like ourselves, who felt and endured all that we should feel and

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[3] *Jesus.*] The received text reads *Jesus Christ.* But Χριστον is omitted in the Alexandrine and other ancient manuscripts, and in the Æthiopic and Vulgate versions, and by Griesbach. It is plain that this writer purposely avoids speaking of Jesus as the Messiah, till he directly asserts, and in his way proves, his superiority to Moses, ver. 6.

[4] *To him who appointed.*] τω ποιησαντι· for this sense of the word ποιεω see Mark iii. 14, and Peirce's note. Some of the ancients objected to the genuineness of this epistle, because Jesus is here represented as *made* by God.

[5] *Family* of God.] In the original it is "his family," that is, as some understand it, the family committed to Moses. See Archbishop Newcome's Translation. The writer unquestionably alludes to Num. xii. 7, where God saith, "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house." The house or family here mentioned is therefore the family of God—it is *all* the household—it includes, therefore, the Christian as well as the Jewish church—in this family Moses is declared to be nothing more than a servant—but Jesus, as the Messiah, is universally allowed to be a son, and therefore, by the authority of the Jewish scriptures themselves, Moses is inferior to Jesus.

Ch. III. Ver. 2. endure in similar circumstances: consider how hard a task he had to accomplish, and mark the faithfulness, the zeal, the fortitude, the perseverance with which he fulfilled the office assigned him. Of Moses, the great prophet and minister of the old dispensation, we read, Numbers xii. 7, that God bore testimony to him, that his servant Moses was faithful in all his house; and what can be more evident than that the same honourable character is equally applicable to him who has been appointed to the still more dignified office of publishing the new and better covenant?

2. Jesus is superior even to Moses himself, being a son and a ruler in that family in which Moses sustained no higher character than that of a faithful servant, ver. 3—6.

3. *For*[1] *he hath received as much greater honour than Moses, as the ruler of a household*[2] *hath more honour than the household.*

You may be surprised, and your feelings may be shocked at what I am about to assert; but you will find it strictly true. This Jesus, this frail suffering

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[1] *For.*] "γαρ, *referendum ad.* v. 1. *Nunc enim ratio affertur, cur attendere debeamus Jesum, quia nempe major est Mose.*" Rosenmuller.

[2] *The ruler of a household.*] ὁ κατασκευασας. "the regulator of a family." Wakefield. "He who framed the household, he who constituted, disposed, set in order any society, hath greater honour than that society or any part of it." Newcome. "Οικ. *est familia—*ὁ κατ. *non est Ædilis, ut multi volunt, sed omnibus rebus necessariis, instruens domum et familiam.* v. Matt. xi. 10." Rosenmuller.

man, of whom I have been discoursing, is superior to our great prophet and lawgiver, even to Moses himself. And as I have alluded to that scripture in which Moses is declared to have been a faithful servant to the household of God, I will add, that Jesus, our teacher and lawgiver, is as much superior to Moses, as the ruler of a family is to any one of the domestics, or even to all united. Ch. III. Ver. 3.

For every household is under some ruler, but he who ruleth all things is God[3]. 4.

In every family there must be some person who has the management and chief direction of the affairs of the household; and in the great moral family to which I allude, the church of God, in all its comprehension and to its utmost extent, the chief manager, the parent and governor of the whole, is God. It is he that appoints to every individual his respective station and employment, and to him they are accountable.

And Moses indeed was faithful in all the family of God[4] *as a servant, for a testimony*[5] *to those things which were afterwards to be spoken.* 5.

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[3] *He who ruleth all things.*] "Every society is and must be ordered and regulated by somebody who is considered as superior to those who are under his jurisdiction; and to show that this is a true state of the case, it extends to all things, and to the government of all; even to God the supreme governor of all, who, therefore, has the supreme glory and honour." Sykes.

[4] *The family* of God.] So Wakefield. Gr. *in all his family.* See ver. 2.

[5] *For a testimony.*] "The meaning seems to be, that Moses was designed to prepare God's church for the message which

Ch. III. Ver. 5. The scripture assures us that Moses was faithful to the great family of God, in which he bore a distinguished office: but it expressly declares that the character he sustained was only that of a servant; and the office he performed to the universal household, including all the people of God, of all ages and countries, was by bearing testimony to the truth and divinity of the doctrine which was to be published by a greater teacher at a remote period of time. This he did both directly, by announcing that such a teacher and prophet would appear, and indirectly, by arranging his institute under divine direction, so as to be typical of, and preparatory to, another and a better dispensation.

6. *But Christ*[1] *as a son, over his family*[2], *which*

Christ was to bring; and that by his writings he so testified of Christ, as that they who duly attended to what he said might come to a certain knowledge of the truth of what Christ should deliver when he came. This is a further hint of the superiority of Christ to Moses. If Moses was thus to prepare men for Christ, it is but reasonable to think that Christ was superior to him." Peirce. "Moses was faithful to his declaration of those things which were afterwards more particularly spoken of. He declared that one should arise like himself. And the prophets afterwards spoke of several particulars about the person of the Messiah, his sufferings, and his being to be cut off." Sykes.

[1] *But Christ.*] This writer uses much address to avoid giving a shock to the prejudices of his countrymen; and there can be little doubt that the epistle was intended for the perusal of the unbelieving as well as the believing Jews, and perhaps chiefly for those who were in a state of suspense, the number of whom was, no doubt, very considerable. He does not mention the obnoxious name of Jesus till ch. ii. 9, after having prepared the way by a sublime description of his character and office; and at the same time connecting his sufferings with the state of glory to which he was advanced in consequence of them, and

family[3] *we are, if we hold fast the confidence*[4], *even the rejoicing of our hope, firm*[5] *unto the end.* Ch. III. Ver. 6.

Your surprise at my assertion of the superiority of Jesus, the founder of the new dispensation, to Moses, the legislator of the Sinai covenant, will be considerably diminished, when I remind you that Jesus is the Christ: that this glorious but suffering man, of whose dignity and humiliation I have been so long discoursing, is that very Messiah of whom Moses prophesied, and to whom the hopes and expectations of our nation have been so long and so eagerly directed. But the Messiah is by all acknowledged to be the son of God; and therefore, of course, he takes precedence in that household

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of their great benefit to mankind. And he never gives him the title of the Messiah till it becomes necessary to his argument to establish his superiority to Moses, and to reconcile the Hebrews to so offensive a doctrine. And even here he carefully avoids introducing any mention of his having been a sufferer. I do not recollect that any of the expositors have noticed the extreme caution with which he connects the names of Jesus and of Christ; though many have remarked his prudence in concealing his own.

[2] *Over his family:*] that is, God's. Not as a son, over his own house, which Peirce says "is utterly disagreeable to the scope of the context, and spoils the sense." See Griesbach, Newcome, and Sykes.

[3] *Which family.*] οὗ is the reading of the Corbey MS., and marked by Griesbach as of considerable authority. The reading of the received text is, *whose* family.

[4] *Confidence.*] παῤῥησιαν. Mr. Peirce thinks there is an allusion here to the profession made of their faith and hope at baptism, which they expressed with joy and glorying. See iii. 14, x. 22, 23.

[5] *Firm.*] βεβαιαν is wanting in the Syriac version: Peirce says it is exegetical, and gives the translation in the text. See ver. 14, where it occurs again.

Ch. III. Ver. 6. over which his Father has appointed him to preside; and in which Moses, however illustrious and venerable, occupies only the humble station of a servant. Of this happy and highly privileged family, we, my friends, are the honoured members, if we courageously persevere in the profession of that faith which we solemnly declared at our baptism, and in which we gloried, and if we stedfastly adhere to the joyful hope of the gospel and regulate our conduct thereby to the end of life.

SECTION IV.

THE rest promised to believers, and into which Jesus introduces his followers, being far superior to that of Canaan, into which Joshua led the Israelites, the writer solemnly warns the Hebrews, from the example of their rebellious ancestors, of the extreme danger of neglecting that state of sabbatism, which Jesus grants to his followers, by which he means their evangelical state.—Ch. iii. 7—iv. 13.

The writer was aware how revolting the doctrine he had advanced was to the prejudices of his readers: and therefore he immediately enters a caution against the natural effect of such prejudices, by reminding them of the great danger of apostasy from the faith. Their ancestors had forfeited the pro-

mised land because they would not give credit to Moses, notwithstanding the miracles to which they had been witnesses in Egypt and the wilderness; and they will sustain a far greater loss, namely, that of all the privileges and blessings of the gospel (which is what he means by *rest*), if they cease to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, after all the evidence which they have had of his divine mission. Ch. III.

1. He introduces from Psalm xcv. an account of the rebellion and punishment of the Israelites in the wilderness, ver. 7—11.

Wherefore, as the holy spirit saith[1], *To-day, when ye*[2] *shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the bitter provocation*[3] *in the day of that trial in the wilderness, wherewith*[4] *your fa-* Ver. 7. 8. 9.

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[1] *The holy spirit saith.*] Perhaps the writer meant nothing more than to say, that a pious writer thus expresses himself in the person and under the character of God. If he meant, as he is usually understood, to assert the inspiration of the Psalmist, it would by no means follow that the Psalmist was actually inspired, because this unknown writer, whose own inspiration is very problematical, affirmed it. The Psalmist himself lays no claim to inspiration; and there is nothing either in the sentiments or the language of that beautiful ode, which an intelligent and pious though uninspired writer might not be very well supposed to have written.

[2] *When ye.*] See Macknight; and Whitby, who proves this to be the proper sense of εαν. Gen. xiii. 8, Job vii. 4, &c.

[3] *The bitter provocation.*] παραπικρασμῳ. See Macknight. "*exacerbatio.*" Schleusner.

[4] *Wherewith.*] οὐ. "According to the manner of the Greek construction, this word relates to the τῃ πειρασμῳ, *temptation*, rather than to ερημῳ, the *wilderness*; and this translation makes the Greek agree exactly with the Hebrew." Peirce.

Ch. III. Ver. 10. *thers tried me*[1], *proved me*[2], *and saw my works forty years*[3]. *Therefore was I grievously offended*[4] *with that generation, and said, Their hearts are always wandering, and they consider*[5] *not my ways; so I sware in my anger, They shall not enter into my rest*[6].

There is a passage in the book of Psalms (xcv. 7—11) in which the writer, whether David or some other pious man, animated with a spirit of devotion and zeal, earnestly exhorts his countrymen, in the name and person of God, to obey his voice, and not to resist his will as their ancestors had done in the wilderness. There, though they had seen the wonderful works of God for forty years together, they murmured at his dispensations, and rebelled against his authority, till at last, as the just pu-

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[1] *Tried me.*] "distrusted his power or goodness." Whitby.

[2] *Proved me.*] εδοκιμασαν. "went about to try and prove him whether he could or would punish sinners; and to provoke and dare him to do his worst." Pococke *ap.* Whitby.

[3] *Saw my works forty years.*] Mr. Peirce supposes that the Hebrew copy which this writer used might agree in its punctuation with his quotation from it.

[4] *Grievously offended.*] προσωχθισα. So Peirce. "exceedingly displeased." Macknight. "I was enraged." Wakefield. See Macknight's note on ver. 17.

[5] *They consider not.*] εκ εγνωσαν. So Wakefield. "They always err, not from ignorance, but from perverseness of disposition, and they have utterly disliked my method of dealing with them." Macknight. *To know* is a common hebraism for *approve.*

[6] *They shall not enter.*] Gr. *If they shall enter: q. d.* "I am not the true God if, &c." Newcome. The citation does not entirely agree either with the Hebrew or the LXX., but perhaps the author quoted from memory, or his copy might read differently.

nishment of their transgressions, the whole generation of those who had grown to maturity when they left Egypt, died in the wilderness before they reached the promised land. Ch. III. Ver. 11.

2. He warns the Hebrews against following this evil example, ver. 12.

So likewise[7] *take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in apostatizing from the living God*[8]. 12.

The warning addressed by the Psalmist to his contemporaries may with equal justice be addressed to you. After all the mighty works, and the extraordinary scenes, to which you have been witnesses, suffer not your prejudices to gain the ascendancy over your understanding, so as to induce you to reject a doctrine which God has so fully attested, because it contains some truths at the first proposal of which your feelings are disposed to revolt.

3. He exhorts them to animate each other to zeal and perseverance, ver. 13—15.

But exhort one another daily, while it is called "To-day[9]*," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of this sin*[10]. 13.

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[7] So likewise.] See Newcome. This verse connects with διο in the seventh verse.

[8] *The living God.*] "the God who ever lives to punish those who offend." See Whitby.

[9] *While it is called "To-day."*] αχρις ε το σημερον καλειται i. e. "as long as you can use this expression, that is, every day." Sykes. Mr. Peirce proposes putting ver. 14 in a pa-

Ch. III. Ver. 13. From day to day that proclamation of the Psalmist is addressed to you: "To-day while you hear his voice harden not your hearts." I solemnly charge you to excite each other's serious attention to the important admonition: lest the many plausible pretences which are continually occurring to induce you to desert your profession should unhappily prevail over your better judgement and your Christian resolution.

14. (*For we are made partakers of Christ*[1], *if we retain firm to the end the confidence with which we began*[2].)

I am the more earnest in exhorting you, and in urging you to exhort one another to perseverance, because it is only by steady practical adherence to those great principles of the Christian doctrine with which you set out in your pious career, that you can attain the reward promised in the gospel and share

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renthesis, resuming the sentence ver. 15, with a little alteration in the construction, not unlike the manner of Paul. See Gal. iii. 4—10. See Peirce and Bowyer.

[10] *This sin:*] *i. e.* the sin of apostasy and unbelief, which has many plausible pretences to offer in its own behalf. See Grotius *in loc.*

[1] *Partakers of Christ.*] "partakers of the benefit of Christ's office." Peirce. "the blessings of Christ's house." Macknight. "sharers with others of the doctrine or the benefits." Sykes.

[2] *The confidence with which we began.*] "the begun confidence; literally, the beginning of the confidence. Perseverance in faith and obedience is requisite to your enjoying the privileges of Christ's house." Macknight. "*ὑποστασις, confidence,* is used in the Old Testament for *hope* or *expectation.* Ruth i. 12, Ezek. xix. 5; here it is used for that hope which is grounded upon Jesus Christ." Sykes. See ver. 6.

in your master's triumph. Therefore exhort each other, Ch. III.

While it is said[3], *To-day when you shall hear his voice, harden not your heart as in that bitter provocation.* Ver. 15.

Hearken to the solemn admonition while it is continued, and comply with it before it be too late. Be warned by the sad example of your rebellious forefathers.

4. He argues the extreme danger of apostasy from the case of the Israelites in the wilderness, ver. 16—iv. 1.

For who when they heard did bitterly provoke? Yea, did not all they who came out of Egypt under Moses[4]*?* 16.

Can you flatter yourselves that the numbers of those who apostatize will secure impunity to each? But was this any security to your rebellious ancestors? Who were the persons that provoked God

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[3] *While it is said,* &c.] "If ver. 14 be read as a parenthesis, then εν τῳ λεγεσθαι will be resuming what he said ver. 13, 'Exhort one another whilst you are saying, or can say, To-day,' &c. See Ps. xli. 3. 10." Sykes.

[4] *Did not all,* &c.] See Griesbach *in loc.* "This turn of the sentence better suits the writer's argument, as well as the succeeding clauses. It is ably defended by Whitby." See Pyle, and Bengel in Bowyer. "The common reading is that of Newcome, For some, when they had heard, provoked *God;* however, not all who came out of Egypt under Moses, viz. Caleb and Joshua." "*Accedo Chrysostomo, Theodoreto, et aliis, qui hæc verba interrogative sumunt.* τινες γαρ. γαρ *non est particula rationem reddens, sed interrogatio. Sic igitur cohærent* ver. 15, 16. Αλλ' ϐ, *Annon?*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. III. Ver 16. with their murmurs when they heard the report of the spies? Was it a small proportion of the people only? Or was it not rather the whole congregation of Israel whom Moses had conducted out of Egypt, with the exception of two individuals only, namely, Joshua and Caleb? And yet their numbers did not screen them from punishment. Nor will numbers rescue you.

17. *And with whom was he grievously offended forty years?* Was it *not with those who sinned, whose carcases fell in the desert?*

Do not you recollect that the apostates were the persons with whom God was offended; those who, when they left Egypt, professed allegiance to him, but afterwards distrusted him and rebelled against him? And did they not all in the course of forty years perish in the desert? Did any who were guilty escape punishment?

18. *And to whom did he swear that they should not enter into his rest, but to those who believed not?*

Who were the persons that were excluded from the land of promise? The rebels who refused to obey the voice of God. And why did they refuse? From unbelief: because, though they had been witnesses to the astonishing miracles by which they had been rescued from the land of Egypt, they could not trust the power and the promise of God to settle them in Canaan: and they were so disheartened by cowardly fears at the lying report of the spies, that when ordered to advance they refused to obey.

So we see[1] *that they could not enter in because of their unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you*[2] *should fall*[3] *short of it.* Ch. III. Ver. 19. Ch. IV. Ver. 1.

From what has been said, it is evident that distrust of the promise of God, a want of faith in his power and goodness, was the primary cause of the apostasy and destruction of your ancestors in the wilderness. And we are in circumstances similar to theirs. To us likewise a rest is promised. We are invited to participate in all the glorious privileges of the new dispensation. The condition of this covenant is faith in the appointed messenger of God. Let us then be solicitous, and I do indeed feel the most earnest solicitude on your account, lest any one of you should, in consequence of any unreasonable and inveterate prejudice, renounce your profession and forfeit all your privileges and your hopes.

We have here another instance of this writer's extreme caution, and fear of wounding the prejudices of his countrymen. The rest he alludes to is the privileges of the gospel; which can be obtained upon no other terms than a belief in Jesus as the Messiah. This he obliquely hints at, but

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[1] *So we see.*] και βλεπομεν· this translation is justified by Dr. Whitby.

[2] *Any of you.*] He was not anxious for himself, but fearful for them. Some copies of little note read ἡμων, *us.*

[3] *Should fall.*] δοκη υστερηκεναι, *should seem to fall*; a common Atticism which does not imply a doubt. See Newcome, Peirce, Wakefield.

Ch. IV. Ver. 1. does not expressly mention, because he has not yet said what he deems sufficient to reconcile their minds to the doctrine of a suffering Messiah.

5. The writer notes the similarity between the circumstances of the ancient Israelites and the believing Hebrews, both having a promise of rest of which faith was the condition, ver. 2, 3.

2. *For we have received glad tidings*[1] *as they also* did; *but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in the hearers.*

I have been cautioning you to be upon your guard that you do not forfeit the promised rest: and there is good reason for this caution; for the circumstances of your ancestors and your own present condition are very similar. To them were announced the glad tidings of a land where they should rest after the fatigues and dangers of the wilderness: to us is announced a better rest; the state of light, of peace, and liberty, which the gospel brings. To your unhappy ancestors the promise was of no value, for they gave it no credit. Nor will the promise of the peace of the gospel be of use to us if we will not believe.

3. (*For we who are believers*[2] *do enter into this*

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[1] *Glad tidings.*] Archbishop Newcome renders the words, "For unto us glad tidings have been proclaimed, as well as unto them." See also Peirce, and Wakefield.

[2] *We who are believers.*] I inclose this clause in a parenthesis, which makes the sense and connexion of the succeeding clause easy and intelligible. Mr. Peirce, in an excellent note,

rest) *agreeably to what is said, So I sware in my anger, They shall not enter*[3] *into my rest.* Ch. IV. Ver. 3.

The indispensable condition of obtaining the blessings of the gospel is faith: believers, and only such, are admitted into rest; either that of Canaan or this of the gospel. Unbelievers are excluded from these privileges, just as your ancestors in the wilderness excluded themselves from the promised land, by refusing to believe in Moses speaking by authority from God: which sad consequence of their folly and their crime is represented as provoking God to anger, and inducing him solemnly to declare that they should not enter into Canaan.

6. The rest of which the Psalmist speaks was not the rest of the sabbath, ver. 3—5.

And although the works were finished from the foundation of the world (for the scripture[4] *somewhere saith thus concerning the seventh day: And God rested on the seventh day from all his works);* —3. 4.

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has vindicated at large the interpretation given in the exposition to the clause in the parenthesis.

[3] *They shall not enter..*] The form of expression in the original is, "*If* they shall enter," &c. This was the Hebrew form of taking an oath: viz. God do so to me, and more also, if the head of Elisha shall stand, &c. 2 Kings vi. 31. See the note on ch. iii. 11.

[4] *For* the scripture.] Including the 4th verse in a parenthesis seems to make the writer's meaning more distinct. See Peirce. The argument is, that as the psalmist speaks of a rest from which the Israelites were to be excluded long after the institution of a sabbath, of which institution they had enjoyed the benefit, it is plain that the sabbath was not the rest intended in the psalm.

Ch. IV. Ver. 5. *yet in this it saith again, They shall not enter into my rest.*

The rest to which David alludes cannot be the rest of the sabbath; for that day of rest, according to the Mosaic writings, was instituted from the beginning of the world, when God rested from his labours. The patriarchs, therefore, and the Israelites in the wilderness, enjoyed this rest, not excepting even those who, by the righteous judgement of God, were excluded from Canaan. The observation of the Psalmist, therefore, glances at some blessings that were still future.

7. Neither was that rest to which the Psalmist, in the name of God, invites his readers, the rest of Canaan, but something more distant still, even that of which believers are now put into possession, ver. 6—9.

6. *Seeing then*[1] *that* a promise *is left that some* are

[1] *Seeing, then, that* a promise *is left.*] Peirce contends for this sense of the clause. Upon the authority of Dr. Macknight, I adopt this construction of the paragraph, though with some diffidence, and take ver. 9 as the conclusion from ver. 6, 7, including ver. 8 in a parenthesis. This seems to me to make the easiest sense. But Mr. Peirce doubts whether αρα, ver. 9, can be the proper redditive for επει, ver. 6; ει being the more usual antecedent. Also, ver. 7, παλιν ought to have και prefixed to it, if there are two distinct arguments. According to Peirce, the train of argument stands thus: Since some are to enter in, and the first did not possess it, therefore he by David fixes another day for seeking an entrance, &c.; plainly showing that the rest alluded to was different both from the sabbath and from Canaan, and therefore he concludes, ver. 9, that this rest is still in reserve, &c.

to *enter therein, and* seeing *that they to whom the glad tidings were first proclaimed did not enter in, because of unbelief; moreover,* seeing *that he mark-eth out a certain day, saying by David so long afterwards, To-day, as the expression is, To-day, when ye shall hear his voice, harden not your heart. (But if Joshua had introduced them into that rest,* God *would not afterwards have spoken of another day.) Therefore there remaineth a sabbath rest*[2] *for the people of God.*

Ch. IV. Ver. 7. 8. 9.

If you consider the case calmly, and reason upon it consistently, you must allow that the rest to which David alludes can be no other than that happy state of peace and privilege which we enjoy under the dispensation of the Messiah.

The Psalmist calls upon his countrymen to attend to the voice of God, that is, the voice of promise, similar to the promise made to their ancestors; this promise still remains to be accomplished, and it shall be fulfilled. It *remains*,—for the deluded wretches to whom it was first made believed it not, and forfeited its blessings. And many ages afterwards God by the Psalmist renews his promise;

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[2] *A sabbath-rest.*] σαββατισμος. This is the free and happy state which believers enjoy under the gospel: it is a perpetual sabbath. The writer no doubt means to insinuate the great superiority of the state of believers in Christ to that of the Jews in Canaan, of the Christian leader to Joshua, and of the Christian sabbath, which extends through every day in the week, to that of Moses, which was limited to one day in seven.—"*Ad hujus quietis participationem perducet nos resurrectionis dies. Interim et* in hac vita *est ejus gustus aliquis, tum in pace conscientiæ, tum in* libertate a ritibus judaicis." Grotius.

Ch. IV. Ver. 9. and in the time of David, the Israelites are invited, even then, to attend to the promise of God. Also, though the Hebrew nation under Joshua took possession of Canaan, yet even after this there is a promise of rest which would not have been made if the possession of Canaan had been the sole object of the promise. Since, therefore, a rest is promised which is neither the rest of the sabbath nor that of Canaan, but is predicted even in the time of David as a future blessing, it can be no other than the gospel dispensation. This is that delightful sabbath of which the believers in Jesus, who are now the chosen people of God, are invited to partake.

We may here remark, 1. This is a specimen of that loose species of reasoning from the scriptures of the Old Testament, which was common among the Jews at the time when this epistle was written, and the conclusions from which are, to say the least, very precarious.

2. The state of things under the gospel dispensation is, by this writer, called a sabbatism, or sabbath rest. It was a rest from the yoke of ceremonial institutions, as well as a release from the bondage of ignorance, idolatry, and vice, and from the condemning sentence of the law. This way of representing the privileges and the blessedness of Christianity was adopted by the earliest Christian writers[1].

[1] *The earliest Christian writers.*] Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho, represents the Christian dispensation as a perpetual sabbath. "The new law," says he in his argument

The happy state into which believers are introduced is by them represented as a sabbath; and under the Christian law they acknowledge no other sabbath but that of an habitual rest from all wickedness, and the habitual practice of all virtue: and therefore the Christian sabbath is not limited to any particular day; but the whole life of a true Christian is a perpetual sabbath, wholly consecrated to God. Ch. IV. Ver. 9.

8. The writer urges the Hebrew Christians to an earnest solicitude for the attainment of this rest, ver. 10, 11.

Moreover, he who entereth into God's *rest, hath rested also from his own works, as God* did *from his*[2]. 10.

He who, by faith in the Messiah, has actually become a partaker of the privileges of the gospel, rests, like God, from his former works: he divests himself of all his former prejudices, and gives up all

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with the Jew, "will have you keep a perpetual sabbath; and you, when you have passed one day in idleness, think you are religious, not knowing what was commanded you. The Lord our God is not pleased with such things as these. If any among us is guilty of perjury or fraud, let him cease from these crimes; if he is an adulterer, let him repent; and he will have kept the kind of sabbath truly pleasing to God." Just. Martyr's *Dial. Tryph.* p. 229, ed. Par.

[2] *He who entereth*, &c.] The writer speaks of Christians as having already entered into God's rest; this expression, therefore, cannot mean the happiness of a future life, but the peace and liberty of the gospel state. And the works from which they rest are the superstitions, idolatries and vices of their unconverted state. "*Utitur hic scriptor verbo αορισῳ, non tantum quia futurum illud certissimum est, verum etiam quia in hac ipsa vita, ut jam diximus, quidam ejus quietis gustus datur.*" Grotius.

Ch. IV. Ver. 10. his superstitious, idolatrous, and vicious practices, that he may lead a holy and new life, becoming the state into which he is introduced.

11. *Let us earnestly endeavour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any one fall after the same example of unbelief*[1].

Take great pains to surmount your prejudices, and to establish your faith in Jesus as the Messiah, how revolting soever to your feelings, recollecting the crime and punishment of your ancestors, and entertaining an habitual fear, lest being chargeable with a similar offence any one of you should fall into a similar condemnation.

9. He concludes this digression with the remark

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[1] *The same example of unbelief.*] Refusing to believe in Moses forfeited the land of Canaan, and not believing that Jesus is the Christ excludes from all the benefits of the Christian covenant. Much, I think, of the beauty of this passage is lost, and much of the pertinence of the writer's observations and reasonings is overlooked, in consequence of the rest of which he speaks, being almost universally understood of the happiness of a future life, instead of the state of relief and liberty under the dispensation of the Messiah, which I have little doubt was the idea which was uppermost in the author's mind. Grotius is the only commentator who seems to have glanced at this interpretation. See his note upon ver. 9, 10. It appears, however, by the following extract from Rosenmuller, that the interpretation here proposed has been adopted by some modern theologians in Germany, and particularly by the celebrated Griesbach.—"*Ven. tamen Griesbachius in Progr.* 1792 *scripto, eorum sententiam probat, qui αναπαυσεως nomine indicari volunt, cessationem ab operibus Mosaicæ legis: quietem ac liberationem a jugo cervicibus Judæorum imposito, quod neque patres eorum nec ipsi ferre poterant,* Act. xv. 10. *quod vero excutiunt, qui aures suas dant Christo blande compellanti ad me venite, &c.* Matt. xi. 28—30."

that the gospel produces a thorough change in those who cordially embrace it, and that the hypocritical professors of religion shall not escape with impunity, ver. 12, 13. Ch. IV. Ver. 11.

For the word of God[2] *is living*[3] *and powerful*[4], *and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit*[5], *and of the joints and marrow*[6], *and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest before it: but all things are naked and open*[7] *to the eyes of him with whom we have to do*[8]. 12. 13.

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[2] *Word of God.*] "The word uttered by Christian teachers and prophets in that age of divine illumination. See ver. 2, ch. ii. 2, vi. 5." Newcome.

[3] *Living.*] "full of life, of spirit, and animation. 1 Pet. i. 3." Newcome.

[4] *Powerful.*] "Efficacious in converting mankind, in teaching, exhorting, and comforting them when converted. 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 1 Thess. ii. 13." Newcome.

[5] *Soul and spirit.*] An allusion to the philosophical but groundless notion, that man consists of three parts, *body, soul,* and *spirit.* 1 Thess. v. "The gospel influences the passions by the most affecting motives, and convinces the reason by the most powerful arguments: it pervades the inmost recesses of the human mind." Newcome.

[6] *Joints and marrow.*] "This seems to allude to the dividing into its several parts the carcases of the beasts that were sacrificed. But the word or power of God can penetrate further than the knife of the priest, even to the thoughts and intents of the heart." Dr. Priestley.

[7] *Open.*] τετραχηλισμενα—ὰ τραχηλος, collum: τραχηλιζειν *est retorquere, reflectere alicujus collum. Hic facies sursum vertitur, fit igitur conspicua, magis venit in conspectum.* Dr. Sykes thinks that the allusion is "to the custom of skinning a beast quite to the neck, and at last skinning neck and all; whence the word comes to signify *quite open, made open to every part: q. d.* as is the meat in a market after it is skinned and laid open,

Ch. IV. Ver. 13.

The gospel of Jesus, which is the doctrine of God, is a living operative principle; where it is duly received, it penetrates the heart and separates what has been long most intimately united. It divides the Jew from his prejudices, the gentile from his superstitions, and the sinner from his crimes: and entering as it were into the recesses of the mind, for it sees every thing in every person, it speaks peace to the humble and the upright.

Nor can the hypocritical professor escape its notice and its just rebuke. If unbelief lies at the bottom of the heart, whatever be the profession of the lips, the word of God discovers it there, and passes a just sentence of exclusion from all the benefits of the gospel. And this sentence shall be ratified by

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and we can look upon it and examine it perfectly." See Newcome.

[8] *Of him with whom we have to do.*] προς ὁν ἡμιν ὁ λογος. "*coram illo verbo de quo nunc agimus.*" Grotius. "of God the inspirer of this word." Newcome. "concerning whom we are speaking; or, with whom we have to do; or, to whom we must give account." Sykes.

Crellius remarks, that some understand *the word of God* as expressive of the person of Christ, and others, of the doctrine of his gospel; with neither of which the description well agrees. He adds: "*Quocirca per sermonem istum Dei intelligenda sunt Dei decreta, quibus incredulos, et contumaces, interitui et supplíciis destinat: cujus generis est illud ipsum Dei juramentum, quo patres illos, et in illis omnes eorum similes, a sud requiete excludere constituit:*" *q. d.* Endeavour to enter into rest; for the word of God, which excludes unbelievers, cannot be imposed upon, cannot be eluded, and will certainly fulfill its purpose in the punishment of the guilty. "*Verum est quod Deus minatur et promittit—Minæ Dei gravissime animam vulnerant, et tristissimos habent effectus—comminationes Dei etiam ad cogitata nostra pertinent. Minis Dei tribuitur quod proprie Dei est.*" Rosenmuller, similar to Crellius.

that Being whose word it is, who knoweth all things, who is the author of our existence and the disposer of our lot, and whose omnipotence shall fulfill all the purposes of his wisdom, and the declarations of his will. Ch. IV. Ver. 13.

SECTION V.

THE WRITER argues the superior dignity of the priesthood of Christ to that of Aaron. Heb. iv. 14—vii.

Before we enter upon the discussion concerning the priesthood of Christ, it may be proper to remark, that many lay an unwarrantable stress upon this writer's figurative language, and suppose some great mystery to be involved in the priesthood of Christ; whereas, in truth, no greater mystery is contained in comparing Christ to a high-priest, than in comparing him to a shepherd or a householder. In order to enter thoroughly into the meaning and spirit of this writer, we must keep in mind that he has two objects in view. The first is, to abate the exorbitant attachment of the Hebrew Christians to their ceremonial institute; and the second, to reconcile their minds to that most obnoxious of all doctrines, a suffering Messiah. To accomplish this design, he represents, in a variety of ways suited to their capacities and views, the superiority of the Christian dispensation to that of

Ch. IV. Moses, even in those particulars which they regarded as the most glorious distinction of their own ritual. Amongst other things, they gloried in the splendour and magnificence of the Levitical priesthood: to meet which prejudice, he reminds them, that the Messiah is predicted under the character of a high-priest of an order superior to that of Aaron [1]. And as every priest must offer a sacrifice, so this great high-priest offered himself to God, a victim of far greater value than any of the sacrifices under the law: and by this figurative representation he endeavours to soften the minds of his prejudiced countrymen. This allusion he illustrates by a variety of arguments and quotations from the Jewish scriptures, some of which are indeed of little intrinsic value, but which were well adapted to the conceptions of his readers, and to their peculiar habits of thinking and reasoning.

In the prosecution of his subject this writer, First, describes the character of Jesus and his qualifications for the priestly office, and asserts his divine designation thereto: ch. iv. 14—v. 10. Secondly, he introduces a pertinent digression con-

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[1] *Superior to that of Aaron.*] "Let us come, saith he, to God's throne of grace with freedom, as having there such a high-priest in whom are all things by way of excellency to be found for which the Levitical priesthood was ordained and repaired to, as having, 1. A better priesthood, viz. after the order of Melchisedec, ch. vii.; 2. A better consecration, viz. by an oath; 3. A better tabernacle in which he ministers; 4. A better sacrifice offered there; 5. A better covenant established in his blood." Whitby. See Dr. Priestley's excellent note.

cerning the importance and difficulty of the subject, and the great danger of apostasy: ch. v. 11—vi. Thirdly, he demonstrates at large that Christ, as a priest after the order of Melchisedec, is greatly superior in dignity to Aaron and his descendants: ch. vii. Ch. IV.

I.

The writer describes the character of Jesus, asserts his qualifications for the priestly office, and vindicates his claim to a divine appointment. Ch. iv. 14—v. 10.

1. The character of Jesus as a high-priest is an encouragement to perseverance and to hope, ver. 14—16.

Having therefore a great high-priest[2], *who is passed* into *the heavens*[3], *Jesus the son of God*[4], *let us hold fast* our *profession*. Ver. 14.

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[2] *A great high-priest.*] The writer resumes the subject which he had introduced ch. ii. 17, 18, iii. 1, Jesus is a *great* high-priest, as he was superior to all former prophets and messengers of God: ch. i. See Peirce.

[3] *Passed* into *the heavens.*] "passed through the heavens in order to obtain the highest." Sykes. The Jewish high-priest entered once a year into the holy of holies, which was the residence of the shechinah. Jesus is here described as having entered into the heavens, or *passed through* the heavens to the immediate residence of God himself, of whom the cloud of glory on the mercy-seat in the Jewish sanctuary was only a symbol.

[4] *Jesus the son of God.*] He had before spoken explicitly of Jesus as the Messiah, ch. iii. 6; he here expressly calls him the Son of God, a title appropriated to the Messiah; and who is so called, as appears from the explanation of the word in the New Testament, because he was the first who was raised from the dead to an immortal life. Rom. i. 4, Col. i. 18.

Ch. IV. Ver. 14. Having already stated the superiority of Jesus, the Messiah, to Moses our celebrated lawgiver, and represented the danger of rejecting his claim, however novel and revolting to preconceived opinions, I proceed now to another topic, at which indeed I have already hinted, to illustrate the superior excellency of Jesus in his priestly office: and having already mentioned that this suffering man, who, in his character of Messiah, is the son of God, has assumed the office of a high-priest, and in this capacity is entered not into an earthly sanctuary, but into heaven itself, and into the immediate presence of God in our behalf, let us persevere in the profession of his religion, that we may not lose the benefit of his official interposition.

15. *For we have not a high-priest who cannot sympathize with our infirmities, but one who hath suffered trials*[1] *in all* respects *like* ourselves, though *without sin*[2].

Our great high-priest, so highly exalted, is nevertheless a man like ourselves, and has in the course of his mission and ministry passed through trials and sufferings similar to ours; yet his faith

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[1] *Suffered trials.*] πεπειρασμενον. The Clermont and many of the ancient writers read πεπειραμενον, *pierced;* which is marked by Griesbach as of great authority. "The meaning is, that he was pierced through, or underwent in the severest manner all the evils of life." Sykes.

[2] *Without sin:*] *i. e.* without deserting his post, and apostatizing from his profession; and therefore he can sympathize with, and is a proper example for, others in similar situations. "without falling away from truth, or doing any thing amiss." Sykes.

and fortitude failed not. He now sympathizes with us. We share in his compassion: let us imitate his fortitude, his resolution and his piety. Ch. IV. Ver. 15.

Let us therefore approach with confidence to the throne of grace[3], *that we may obtain mercy and find favour for seasonable relief*[4]. 16.

As our high-priest is already in the most holy place, we also may take courage to approach the mercy-seat, where, in answer to humble supplication, we shall obtain mercy to forgive past transgressions, and all seasonable assistance to carry us through present and future difficulties.

The meaning of the writer, stripped of his figurative language, is this: The resurrection and ascension of Jesus is a clear proof of his divine mission and of his acceptance with God: if his disciples imitate his example of faith, and fortitude, and piety, they likewise shall be accepted, and in answer to their earnest prayers they shall be supplied with all the assistance which is requisite to their ultimate success.

2. The qualifications and duties of a high-priest are described, ver. 1—3.

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[3] *The throne of grace.*] the mercy-seat, our high-priest being already there. See Peirce.

[4] *Seasonable relief.*] βοηθεια is "help obtained in consequence of crying aloud for it." Macknight. "that we may find favour to have help whenever it is wanted. Seasonable opportune help, if at any time we should fall into times of persecution," &c. Sykes.

Ch. V. Ver. 1. *Now every high-priest taken from among men*[1] *is appointed in behalf of men* in *divine services, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*[2].

You know, my brethren, the official duties of the high-priest: it is his business to take the lead in religious worship, especially upon great occasions; and particularly, to offer both voluntary sacrifices and sin offerings.

2. *Who can be mildly affected*[3] *towards those who*
3. *err through ignorance*[4], *being himself encompassed with infirmity; and for this* reason *he ought, as for the people, so for himself also, to offer* sacrifices *for sins*[5].

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[1] *Taken from among men.*] This implies, that Jesus was taken from among men; that is, that he was properly a man, otherwise the parallel will not hold.

[2] *Sacrifices for sins.*] The high-priest's duty was to officiate for the people in presenting before God both free-will offerings as tributes of gratitude, and sin-offerings, particularly on the day of atonement.

[3] *Mildly affected.*] See Newcome. "μετριοπαθειν, *modice affici.*" Budæus. Peirce observes that "the word is borrowed from the Platonists, in opposition to the Stoics. The wise man is moderate in his affections, not destitute of them."

[4] *Those who err through ignorance.*] Literally, those who are ignorant and out of the way: a common hendiadys for those who err through ignorance. See Peirce.

[5] *For himself also.*] Hence Grotius infers, that Christ must have offered for himself a sacrifice for sin; *i. e.* that he might be delivered from those sufferings to which he was liable for the sins of mankind: ch. vii. 26, 27. Grotius's notion of Jesus offering a sacrifice for his own sin is certainly right; but the author means by *sin*, not moral evil, but ceremonial impurity. "In this respect," says Dr. Priestley, "he shows that the Hebrew high-priest resembled the Christian; since his offering for himself as well as for the people showed that he was liable to transgression as well as they: the sacrifices that he offered being for sin." But it does not appear to have occurred to Dr. Priest-

The law makes no provision for wilful transgression; but sacrifices are provided to reinstate those who, by ignorance and inadvertency, forfeit the blessings of the Mosaic covenant. It is the high-priest's duty to offer these sacrifices; and being himself liable to these inadvertencies, he will the more readily sympathize with others in the same situation, and be more disposed to offer sacrifices for others, being himself in need of a similar purification. How far this analogy holds, and the great comparative superiority of the Christian high-priest, will hereafter be explained. Ch. V. Ver. 3.

3. The writer vindicates the divine designation of Jesus to this high office, ver. 4—6.

And as *no one taketh this honour to himself,* 4.
but he who is called by God as Aaron was, *so also* 5.
Christ did not assume to himself the honour of being made a high-priest, but he conferred the office upon him *who said to him, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee*[6]*: as he saith also in another* 6.

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ley at the time, that the sacrifices in both cases were offered for ceremonial and involuntary, not for moral offences.

[6] *This day,* &c.] Hence Whitby, Peirce, and others, infer that Jesus did not enter upon his priestly office till after his resurrection; which Doddridge and others vehemently oppose. But the controversy appears to me to be as trivial as it would be to dispute when he entered upon the office of a shepherd. These learned writers do not appear to have sufficiently adverted to the fact, that the author of this epistle strains the allegory of Christ's priestly office merely to accommodate himself to the prejudices of the Hebrew Christians.

Ch. V. Ver. 6. psalm, *Thou* art *a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.*

A divine appointment is essential to the validity of the priesthood. We all know that Aaron was constituted the high-priest by immediate direction from God, and the priesthood was made hereditary in his family. Jesus also is divinely appointed to a similar office. Nor would he have presumed to have arrogated this honour without a divine designation to it. And that he is so appointed is evident: for I have already established the important fact that Jesus is the true Messiah. And of the Messiah God saith in the second psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee: in allusion, as I have before observed, to his resurrection from the dead. But of the same distinguished personage it is also said in another psalm, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. I shall therefore, in the subsequent discourse, assume it as the principle and ground of my argumentation, that Jesus is, by divine appointment, a high-priest of this rank and description.

4. Jesus was qualified for his office by the discipline of sufferings, ver. 7—10.

7. *He, in the days of his flesh, having offered prayers and supplications with strong crying* [1] *and tears to him who was able to deliver him from death,*

[1] *With strong crying.*] Referring to his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, related by three of the evangelists.

and having been delivered from his terror[2], *though he were a son, learned obedience by his sufferings;* Ch. V. Ver. 8.
and having been made perfect[3], *he became the author of eternal salvation*[4] *to all that obey him;* 9.
having been addressed by God[5] *as a high-priest according to the order of Melchisedec.* 10.

This Jesus, who is now our great high-priest, was once a sufferer, and by his sufferings was disciplined to obedience and to sympathy. During his personal ministry, and especially as it drew near to a close, having a clear and distinct foresight of the

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[2] *From his terror.*] εισακουσθεις απο της ευλαβειας. Dr. Whitby has fully justified this translation in his excellent note upon this text. That εισακουσθεις signifies *deliverance* in answer to prayer, is evident from Ps. xxii. 21, xxxiv. 6, lv. 2; and that ευλαβεια signifies *fear* in general, is clear from Josh. xxii. 24, Heb. xii. 28, xi. 7, Acts xxiii. 10. Our Lord was not delivered from those sufferings which were the objects of his dread, but from that distress of mind which would have prevented him from passing through them with becoming dignity and fortitude. And the history of his sufferings shows, that after the paroxysm of terror and agony in the garden, the whole of his behaviour through every stage of his succeeding unparalleled sufferings, was calm, collected, and heroic, in the highest degree. "*in hoc exauditus, fuit ut ab isto metu liberaretur.*" Grotius.

[3] *Made perfect.*] Τελειωθεις seems here to mean nothing more than his being in consequence of his sufferings perfectly qualified for the office of high-priest. "*consummato opere.*" Grotius.

[4] *Author of eternal salvation.*] Having taught the doctrine, and being himself an example of the fact; having led the way to eternal life.

[5] *Addressed by God.*] προσαγορευθεις. In Psalm cx. God is the speaker, and he addresses the Messiah as a high-priest after the order of Melchisedec. This is the circumstance to which the writer alludes. Macknight renders the words, "being saluted by God." "something more than called: just as a man is saluted or proclaimed emperor." Sykes.

Ch. V. Ver. 10. indignities to which he was to be exposed, and the cruel sufferings he was to endure, the exquisite sensibility of his mind was for a season overpowered, and he earnestly and repeatedly implored of his heavenly father that if possible the bitter cup might pass from him; but he tempered his desires and his distressing apprehensions with the humblest and most dutiful resignation to the will of God: Nevertheless, if it may not pass from me, thy will be done. And you cannot fail to recollect, that though his heavenly Father did not grant the direct object of the petition, the crucifixion of the Messiah being an essential part of the wise plan of providence, yet he bestowed what was a full equivalent. He calmed all his painful apprehensions, and infused that fortitude and dignity of spirit which so eminently distinguished the closing scenes of his life. Thus, though the son of God, the true Messiah, his mind, like that of other men, needed the discipline of suffering to form it to a proper temper both of resignation and of tender pity, such as I have before described to be essential qualifications of a high-priest: and being thus eminently qualified for his office, he was at the proper season invested with it, and became the pattern and the guide of his obedient disciples to everlasting life; having long before been announced by God himself in the language of prophecy as a high-priest after the order of Melchisedec.

II.

The writer now introduces a pertinent digression

concerning the importance and difficulty of the subject upon which he is about to discourse, and the danger of apostasy; expressing at the same time his good hopes concerning the believing Hebrews, and earnestly exhorting and encouraging them to persevere in their Christian profession. Ch. v. 11—vi. 20. Ch. V. Ver. 10.

A former digression was introduced (ch. iii. 7), by way of caution to the believing Hebrews, immediately after the writer had announced the very offensive doctrine, that Jesus, the crucified man, was the true Messiah and superior to Moses. The present digression is introduced upon a similar occasion, and for a similar purpose, now that he is about to establish the equally obnoxious fact, that the priesthood of Jesus, after the order of Melchisedec, is appointed to supersede the Levitical priesthood, and with it the whole of that institute, of which their ministration constituted an essential part, in order to make way for a new and a superior dispensation. He previously warns them, therefore, of the great danger of apostasy from the Christian faith, how offensive soever the doctrines of the Christian religion may be to their feelings and prepossessions.

1. He informs them that he has much to advance concerning the analogy between the priesthood of Jesus and that of Melchisedec, which, however, he is apprehensive that they will hardly be able to understand, ver. 11—14.

Ch. V Ver. 11. *Concerning whom we have much to say, and difficult to be explained, to you who are dull of apprehension* [1].

There is a spiritual and mystical sense in the history of Melchisedec which I am desirous of opening to you; but your plain unlettered understandings have been so much used to take the story in its literal sense, that I fear I shall hardly be able to make you comprehend its figurative meaning.

12. *For whereas by this time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need on the contrary* [2] *to be taught yourselves the first elements* [3] *of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk* [4], *and not of strong food.*

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[1] *Dull of apprehension.*] "dull of hearing." Wakefield. "*remiss, careless*; that has little or no desire to hear or learn." Sykes.

[2] *On the contrary.*] παλιν. So Wakefield. "ye have again need that some one should teach you." Gronovius, Peirce, Bowyer.

[3] *The first elements.*] τα στοιχεια της αρχης, "the very elements." Sykes. Whitby remarks, that all the ancient commentators understand by first principles "the *humanity of Christ*; because the preachers of the gospel spake of that only to them who were not yet perfect in the faith." A memorable concession, not much to the credit of the doctrines so suppressed. He refers to Theodoret, whose words he quotes; to Chrysostom, to Œcumenius, Theophylact, and Irenæus.

[4] *Ye have need of milk*, &c.] "you are to be taught the first principles of revelation, instead of being taught what concerns the office of Christ, and what you are to suffer or go through for his name's sake. Not that the apostle would have some doctrines taught to some, and other doctrines taught to others; or some doctrines concealed, while others only are to be taught; but as Christians are able to improve in the knowledge of the oracles of God, so they were to go on to perfection." Sykes.

I am inclined to believe, that as the allegorical interpretation

I am very apprehensive that instead of improving you are gone backward in religious knowledge; that instead of being qualified to be teachers of others, as might reasonably have been expected from the date of your conversion, you have forgotten some of the first principles of the Christian doctrine; and that you are really returned to the state of infants in understanding, who can apprehend only the easiest and the plainest principles; instead of having grown up to manly sense, capable of relishing and digesting strong and wholesome though unpalatable truths. Ch. V. Ver. 12

For every one who partaketh of milk only, *is unskilled in the doctrine of justification*[5], *for he is* but *an infant: but strong food belongeth to full grown* 13.

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of the Old Testament was at that time much in fashion, they who found out a sense the most remote from the true and primary signification of the words were considered as the most learned, they were men in understanding who relished strong meat, while they who understood and approved only the primary and literal meaning were babes who were fed and pleased with milk. This writer, who was no apostle, and who appears to be well satisfied with his own skill in figurative interpretation, speaks disparagingly of the Hebrew converts, because of their want of skill in this sort of learning, and their disrelish to it.

[5] *Justification.*] This is a phrase which often occurs in the epistles of Paul, particularly in those to the Romans and the Galatians. It signifies a covenant or privileged state: that state which the Jews had forfeited by their violations of the Mosaic law, and into which Jews and Gentiles were now introduced by faith in the gospel independently of all ritual institutions. Rom. iii. 21 to the end. The use of this expression, so common in the writings of Paul, though it will not of itself prove that the apostle was himself the author of the epistle, may be considered as a presumption that the writer, whoever he might be, was at least a companion of the apostle, and familiar with his style and manner.

Ch. V. Ver. 14. *men, who by habit have their senses exercised to the discernment both of good and evil.*

They who are satisfied with simple and obvious interpretations of scripture are not well skilled in the doctrine of Christ, the belief of which brings us into a state of privilege and covenant with God. But they who see into the mystical sense of the Old Testament are men of understanding, capable of judging of the force of an argument, and of distinguishing between right and wrong.

Upon this singular paragraph it may be remarked,

1. That it is plain that by the things *hard to be understood* the writer means the allegorical turn which he gives in the following discourse to the history of Melchisedec.

2. That he censures, in language bordering upon severity, the ignorance of the Hebrews with respect to the allegorical meaning of the Old Testament. This was a favourite method of interpretation in the age in which this author wrote, and for that reason he is the more excusable, it being the error, not of himself in particular, but of the age in which he lived. The same method of interpreting the writings of the New Testament was very early introduced into the Christian church; so that plain Christians, who contented themselves with understanding plain language in its obvious sense, were regarded with contempt[1] as simple ignorant people;

[1] *Contempt.*] Vid. Eusebius's *Eccl. History*; where Papias,

and by these means the tenets of a false philosophy were early engrafted upon Christianity, which, when they could not be supported by the obvious sense of the scriptures, were pretended to be proved by the mystical interpretation. Ch. V. Ver. 14.

I cannot therefore agree with the author of this epistle in the censure which he passes upon the believing Hebrews; for I do not conceive that a mystical interpretation of a plain historical narrative is either a judicious or an useful way of interpreting the scriptures either of the Old Testament or the New.

2. Notwithstanding his apprehension that they may not thoroughly comprehend his meaning, he nevertheless proceeds to advance the doctrine to which he alludes, ch. vi. 1—3.

Wherefore, dismissing[2] *the first principles* of the doctrine *of Christ*[3], *let us advance*[4] *towards per-* Ch. VI. Ver. 1.

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a venerable man, contemporary with the apostles, is treated with contempt for his attachment to the literal interpretation; and Origen is highly commended for his early inquiries into the mystical sense of the scriptures. *Euseb.* lib. iii. c. 31.

[2] *Wherefore, dismissing.*] "Since, considering the time, ye ought to understand higher doctrines:" ch. v. 12. Newcome. See also Peirce.

[3] *The principles* of the doctrine *of Christ.*] "τον της αρχης τε Χριστε λογον, by a hypallage, or την τε λογε τε Χριστε αρχην, which seem to carry the same sense as the first elements of the oracles of God: ch. v. 12." Owen *apud* Bowyer. "let us leave discoursing on the principles *of the doctrine* of Christ." Newcome.

[4] *Let us advance.*] "I go on to offer you something more solid and fit for you as adult persons." Peirce; who observes that "the writer seems to have had an eye to what he had said

Ch. VI. *fection* (*not laying again the foundation*[1] *of repent-*
ance from dead works, and of faith towards God,
Ver. 2. *of the doctrine of baptisms, and of the imposition*
of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and
3. *of the everlasting judgement*) : *and this let us do*[2],
if God permit.

Since therefore all of you ought to be well informed in the doctrine of Christ, and some of you, I trust, are so, I shall cease to insist upon those fun-

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in the last verse of the foregoing chapter." Eph. iv. 11—15; Col. i. 28.

[1] *The foundation.*] Mr. Peirce considers the Old Testament as a more obscure representation of Christ, and that the Jewish religion contained a rough draught, or imperfect rudiments, of Christianity; the insisting upon which, after the meaning of them had been set in so clear a light by the coming of Christ, is waved by the author. He explains, therefore, all the articles here enumerated as expressive of something under the Jewish dispensation. But the fact is, that the author takes great pains to explain the allusions of the Old Testament, whether real or imaginary: these he calls the strong meat for men advanced to maturity; whereas he insists but little upon the obvious principles of Christianity, which, though of the highest importance in themselves, were level to every capacity, and which he calls "milk for babes." These, therefore, appear to me, as to the generality of expositors, to be the true sense of the articles here specified. Dr. Macknight adopts Mr. Peirce's interpretation.

"Fundamental doctrines," says Dr. Sykes, "were not in those early days the same as they grew to be in ages of contention, when Christianity came to be a matter of abstruse, metaphysical, unintelligible jargon, involved in thick darkness and covered with mystery; but men were taught the easy and plain doctrines of faith in one God, the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ his son our Lord, and repentance from dead works, and the meaning of laying on of hands, and of baptism, and a resurrection, and a future judgement."

[2] *Let us do.*] "Include in a parenthesis, from *not laying again*, ver. 1, to *judgement*, ver. 2. And ver. 3 we should read ποιησωμεν as φερωμεθα, ver. 1." Markland *ap.* Bowyer. See Griesbach.

damental articles of the Christian faith which are familiar to you, and with divine permission I shall proceed to instruct you in those points which are better adapted to the manly age of Christian discipline, and shall lay open to you the hidden meaning of the Old Testament scriptures, that you may clearly discern the analogy which subsists between the old dispensation and the new, and the decided superiority of the latter. Ch. VI. Ver. 3.

The writer still alludes to his proposed mystical interpretations, which he calls meat for strong men, as distinguished from the great first principles of Christianity, which he represents as milk for babes. Of these principles he has here given a distinct enumeration, which, having been drawn up by an apostolical man in the apostolic age, may be justly regarded as the only genuine apostles' creed, differing indeed in many articles from the ancient symbol which now bears that venerable name, and much more from those masses of absurdity, which the ignorance and arrogance of those who have usurped the authority of Christ in succeeding ages, have presumed to impose upon the ignorance and credulity of the Christian world.

(1) The first of these fundamental articles is "repentance from dead works[3]," that is a change of

[3] *Repentance from dead works.*] "works which lead to death, or works wrought by those who are dead in sins. See 1 Tim. v. 6." Newcome. Dr. Sykes observes, that "*dead works* are no where mentioned but in this epistle, and that they are such as

Ch. VI. Ver. 3.

mind with respect to the importance of those ceremonial practices which the Mosaic institute imposed, and upon the breach of which the law inexorably pronounced sentence of death. These rites, upon which the Hebrews once laid so mighty a stress, and in which they once placed their chief confidence, were given up as of no use, and exchanged for the milder requisitions of the gospel.

(2.) "Faith towards God," believing the record that God has given of his son, 1 John, v. 11, and admitting the mission and doctrine of Jesus upon the authority of his divine credentials.

(3.) "The doctrine of baptisms[1]," the baptism of water, by which they who embraced the Christian religion publicly professed their faith in Christ, and the baptism of the holy spirit, by which that faith was ratified and confirmed.

(4.) "The imposition of hands[2]," which was a

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lead to death, such as God will punish with death." But the writer seems rather to mean a *change of mind* (μετανοια) with regard to ritual impositions. The Hebrews laid too much stress upon the works of the law; the gospel requires that they should build their hopes upon faith in Christ, which brings forth fruit unto holiness, the end of which is everlasting life. Whereas, by the works of the law no flesh living can be justified. The law leaves its votaries under a sentence of death: the works of the law, therefore, may justly be called dead works: and the first principle in which the converted Jew was instructed, was to renounce the hope of justification by the law; he was taught repentance from dead works. μετανοια is used in the same sense ch. xii. 17.

[1] *Baptisms.*] "that is, Christian baptism; the plural for the singular superlative. Compare Eph. iv. 5." Simpson's *Notes on Scripture.*—"βαπτισμοι *est baptismus qui in plures homines confertur.*" Rosenmuller.

[2] *Imposition of hands.*] viz. "the use and purport of this

rite practised in the apostolic age as a token of the effusion of the holy spirit, and also as a solemn designation to the office of an elder or an evangelist, where no supernatural powers were pretended to be communicated. Ch. VI. Ver. 3.

(5.) "The resurrection of the dead[3]" is justly introduced as a fundamental article of the Christian faith, and is with great propriety mentioned to the believing Hebrews, whose views upon this subject, previously to their acquaintance with the Christian doctrine, were very limited and obscure.

(6.) The most essential doctrine of all is, "the eternal judgement[4]," or that awful decision, which assigns both to the righteous and to the wicked their respective portions in the future life: for the

practice, sometimes to give the holy ghost; sometimes to appoint persons to offices, Acts vi. 6, xiii. 3; sometimes to heal, Acts ix. 12, 17." Sykes.

[3] *Resurrection of the dead.*] This is a doctrine not taught in the Old Testament, though a future life was probably expected by the pious Jews, and after the return from the captivity the Pharisees taught the resurrection. But it was represented as a privilege belonging to the Jews only. See Joseph. *De Bell. Jud.* lib. viii. c. 8, § 14.

[4] *The eternal judgement,*] "the effects of which will continue for ever." Newcome.—Mr. Peirce understands the expression of those tremendous judgements of which the books of Moses give an account, such as Sodom and Gomorrha, Pharaoh and his host, &c.; not thinking it likely that the writer would pass over a doctrine of such consequence. But the writer was far from meaning to represent these doctrines as of no moment; on the contrary, he holds them up as the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, but at the same time so obvious, that all who professed faith in Christ believed and acknowledged them; but he declines to insist upon them at present, it being his design to enlarge upon certain doctrines which, though important, were remote and obscure.

Ch. VI. Ver. 3. Christian revelation most explicitly and positively announces that we shall all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body according to that we have done, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

Such are the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, and happy had it been for the Christian world had they been left in the simplicity of this primitive and apostolic representation.

3. The writer solemnly warns his readers of the great danger of apostasy, ver. 4—8.

4. *For it is impossible to renew*[1] *those to repentance who have been once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift*[2], *and have been made partakers of*
5. *the holy spirit*[3], *and have tasted the excellent word*

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[1] *For it is impossible to renew.*] *q. d.* "I speak particularly to you who are disposed to go on to perfection. To apostates I have nothing to say. For (γαρ) it is impossible," &c. Owen, see Bowyer. The construction requires that the word corresponding to αναχαινιζειν should in the translation be placed before the accusatives depending upon it. Macknight, Newcome.—It is *impossible*, because whatever could be said or done to that end had been said or done already. Le Clerc on Hammond, Newcome.

[2] *Heavenly gift.*] "the bounty of God bestowed on men through the gospel. John iv. 10, Rom. v. 17." Newcome. "To taste this gift is to perceive, to be sensible of the truth of such gift." Sykes.

[3] *Made partakers of the holy spirit.*] "If it be imagined that every Christian enjoyed some extraordinary gift of the holy spirit, this is more than can be inferred from this place; for if a person were convinced of the truth of the gospel by a careful study of the scriptures, or by seeing himself, or being fully satisfied of the miraculous powers and assistances of the first

of God[4], *and the mighty works of the age that was to come*[5], *and yet have relapsed*[6], *since they again crucify to themselves the son of God, and expose* him *to public infamy*[7]. Ch. VI. Ver. 6.

Without dwelling therefore any longer upon these obvious principles, I shall immediately proceed to those more difficult subjects to which I have alluded; for indeed it would be a total loss of time and labour to attempt to reclaim those who have apostatized from the Christian faith in opposition to that commanding evidence which has been ex-

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preachers of the gospel, he might be properly enough said to be a partaker of the holy ghost. However, if the apostle be thought to speak of such as actually had the gifts of the holy ghost, and yet fell away from Christianity, his reasoning is still stronger, and the unlikelihood of bringing such back to truth still greater." Sykes.

[4] *Excellent word of God.*] καλον· " the good word of God dictated by the spirit." Newcome. " the comfortable and sure word of God, which instructs men how to act with uprightness and honesty in every station and circumstance of life." Sykes.

[5] *Mighty works of the age to come.*] " had experience of the extraordinary miracles wrought in this age of the Messiah." Peirce. To the same purport Newcome, Wakefield, Sykes.— " *experiri, quid religio Christiana efficere possit.*" Rosenmuller.

[6] *And yet have relapsed.*] παραπεσοντας παλιν, " have fallen away again." This punctuation is more correct than that which joins παλιν to ανακαινιζειν, where it is redundant. Erasmus, Peirce, Bowyer. Macknight observes that και is here taken in its adversative sense. Also that " our translators have, after Beza, without any authority inserted the word *if* (if they fall away), that the text might not appear to contradict the *Calvinistic* doctrine of the perseverance of the saints."

[7] *Expose* him *to infamy.*] " By their practice they in effect crucify the son of God, and expose him to infamy. See Matt. i. 19." Peirce. " They treat him as if they thought he deserved the sentence executed upon him." Sykes. " αναστανρειν *idem est quod* στανρειν, *nec significat* rursus crucifigere." Rosenmuller.

Ch. VI. Ver. 6. hibited before you, and which effected your conversion to the gospel doctrine. It is indeed a hopeless case, and morally impossible to recover those who have relapsed into their former state of unbelief after having discerned the evidences of Christian truth, and having enjoyed the liberty which the gospel gives; after having even participated in the spiritual gifts, and been convinced by them of the divine authority of the doctrine of Jesus, having not only been witnesses to the stupendous miracles wrought by the first teachers of Christianity, but having themselves been endued with miraculous powers. Persons who resist evidence like this are absolutely irrecoverable, as no stronger evidence will, or can, be produced to overcome their prejudices. Such persons, by their conduct, show that they regard Jesus as an impostor, and that, in their judgement, he deservedly suffered an ignominious death: and corresponding to their principles and their conduct will be their final state.

7. *For the land*[1] *which drinketh in the rain that falleth often upon it, and produceth herbage useful to those for whom it is cultivated, receiveth a bless-*
8. *ing* from God[2]: *but that which beareth thorns and*

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[1] *For the land.*] "These cannot be restored, *for* (γαρ) as good men resemble fertile ground, these resemble what is barren." Newcome.

[2] *Receiveth a blessing* from God.] See Gen. i. 11, xxvii. 27. Wakefield places απο Θεω after γεγον, without which he says the passage is absurd. His version is: "the land which drinketh the rain that is often falling upon it from God, and beareth herbage useful to the tillers of it, receiveth praise."

briars, is *rejected, and near to a curse*[3]; *whose end* Ch. VI. Ver. 8.
is to be burned up[4].

A fertile soil, which thrives under the cultivater's hand, and is enriched by the rain from heaven, is acceptable and useful to the proprietor, and by further cultivation becomes more abundantly fruitful: and in like manner, they who attend to and improve Christian instruction shall advance in knowledge, virtue and usefulness, and in the favour of God. But as rocky barren land, which resists all the arts of cultivation, and produces nothing but thorns and briars, at length wearies out the patience of the husbandman, and is left by him under the original curse, and for want of water and manure is burned up by the scorching heat of the sun; so shall they, who wilfully stop their ears against the mild and gentle voice of instruction and discipline, be, after sufficient season of trial, abandoned by God and man, and left to suffer the just and awful consequences of their own obstinacy and folly.

4. The writer expresses his good hope concern-

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[3] *Near to a curse.*] "near being pronounced barren." Newcome. An allusion to the curse, Gen. iii. 17, 18. The writer uses a soft expression, that he might not appear to represent their case as already desperate: they were nigh unto a curse." Peirce.

[4] *Whose end is to be burned up.*] Dr. Macknight observes, that "a principal part of the eastern agriculture consists in leading rills of water from ponds, &c., to render the fields fruitful. When this is neglected, the land is scorched by the heat and drought of the climate."

CH. VI. ing the character and state of the Hebrew Christians, founded upon their past conduct, ver. 9, 10.

VER. 9. *But, beloved*[1], *we are persuaded better things of you, and things that belong to salvation, though we thus speak.*

My dear brethren, though I have thought it necessary, in order to put you upon your guard, to represent the great danger of apostasy from the faith, I am very far from intending to insinuate that you are chargeable with this great offence. On the contrary, I entertain the best hopes concerning you, that you still maintain, and will continue to hold fast, that firm faith and that unshaken fidelity, and will persevere in the practice of those evangelical virtues, which will ensure your eternal happiness.

10. *For God is not unjust, so as to forget your active love*[2] *which ye have shown to his name*[3], *in having relieved and in* still *continuing to relieve the saints*[4].

You have shown your love to God and your regard to his authority, not by empty professions, but by active obedience, and particularly by the kind sympathy which you have manifested, and the seasonable relief which you have afforded, and which

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[1] *But, beloved.*] Mr. Peirce observes, that this softening expression is much in the manner of Paul. See 2 Thess. ii. 13, Eph. iv. 20, Rom. viii. 9.

[2] *Your active love.*] τὸ ἔργον καὶ τῆς ἀγάπης, your work and love: "an hendiadys." Newcome. Griesbach, upon the authority of many copies, drops the words τὸ κόπου.

[3] *Shown to his name.*] "τὸ ὄνομα Θεοῦ, *ipse Deus. Sensus: ex obsequio apud Deum.*" Rosenmuller.

[4] *Relieve the saints.*] See Wakefield. In what manner they had particularly exerted themselves he describes ch. x. 33, 34.

you still continue to administer, to afflicted and persecuted Christians: and you have served a just and bountiful master, who will not forget your kindness to his suffering friends, but will regard it as done to himself, and will publicly acknowledge it, and honourably requite you for it another day. Ch. VI. Ver. 10.

5. His design is to encourage and stimulate them to Christian perseverance, ver. 11, 12.

But we desire that every one of you would show the same diligence even to the end, in order to the complete consummation[5] *of* your *hope.* 11.

My only design in suggesting these alarming admonitions is to engage every individual among you, without any exception, to persevere in the same active faith and pious duty, and in the same kind and benevolent conduct, to the end of life, and to suffer no consideration whatever to alienate your hearts from your Christian profession, and then you may rest assured that your hopes shall in due time re-

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[5] *The complete consummation.*] Connect ενδεικνυσθαι with αχρι τελος, "show the same diligence to the end." Bengelius *ap.* Bowyer. εκαστον, we desire not only that *many*, but that every one of you without exception. See Peirce. "προς την πληροφοριαν της ελπιδος, *non est rectitudo, sed impletio, sive consummatio.* Col. ii. 2, 1 Thess. i. 5, 2 Tim. iv. 5." Grotius.—"*spes plena.*" Rosenmuller. "that *your* hope may be complete—*my* hope." Macknight. "the object of hope, Jesus Christ: that you may acknowledge him to the end of life." Peirce. Rather joining the construction of Bengel with the interpretation of Peirce: We desire that every one of you would show to the end of life the same diligence in the service of God, that you may ultimately obtain the object, the consummation of your hope, in your everlasting salvation.

CH. VI. ceive their complete accomplishment, and that your highest expectations shall be greatly exceeded.

VER. 12. *That ye be not slothful*[1], *but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises*[2].

And my desire also is to rouse your exertions in the practice of duty, and to induce you to imitate the bright examples of your brethren in different parts of the world, who, by the exercise of persevering faith in the great doctrines of Christianity, are in actual possession of the privileges promised to the spiritual descendants of Abraham, and joyful expectants of infinitely better blessings in reversion.

6. He reminds them that it was by perseverance in faith that Abraham eventually obtained the promised blessing, ver. 13—15.

13. *Now when God made the promise*[3] *to Abraham,*

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[1] *Slothful.*] "νωθρος, tardus ad sperandum: *qui non facile sperat, sed semper dubitat: proprie,* tardus ad ambulandum: *pro homine* stupido *sumitur,* ch. v. 11." Rosenmuller.

[2] *Inherit the promises.*] Commonly understood of those who by death are supposed to be advanced to future happiness, and this text is alleged as an argument for the intermediate state. See Doddridge. I think, with Peirce, that the writer alludes to the converted Gentiles, or in general to all who were stedfast in the profession of Christianity. "He means such good Christians as had persevered in their profession of Christ, and were now in possession of what God had promised to Abraham." Sykes.

[3] *God made the promise.*] "This alludes to the promise made to Abraham, upon the occasion of his offering up Isaac, Gen. xxii. 15, 16; which was the only time when the promise to this patriarch was confirmed by an oath." Peirce.

because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Assuredly I will abundantly bless thee, and I will abundantly multiply thee. And thus Abraham having waited patiently obtained the promise[4].

Ch. VI. Ver. 14. 15.

Our pious ancestor Abraham is an eminent example of that patient perseverance in faith which I recommend to you. God commanded him to quit his native country, and promised him a posterity by Sarah in whom all nations should be blessed: he believed and obeyed. And after Isaac was born, in a season of great trial, when, as the history relates, he had shown a readiness to offer this child of promise upon the altar, as a reward of his unhesitating faith, the supreme Being bound himself by an oath to fulfill every promise he had made to his virtuous and faithful servant: and the faith of the patriarch remaining unshaken under these severe trials, he was in due time rewarded by the accomplishment of the promise; first in his own person, in the gift and preservation of his son; afterwards in a numerous progeny descending from him; and ultimately, in the innumerable multitude of his spiritual descendants, who, being the heirs of his faith, are also co-heirs with him of the divine promise.

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[4] *Obtained the promise.*] "Abraham waited with patience many years ere he could see any posterity from Isaac; but at length what was promised about the increase of his family was made good, and he obtained, not the *promises* but the *promise*, the particular promise of blessing and multiplying him, or enlarging his family: ver. 14." Sykes.

Ch. VI. 7. The promise and the oath of God are the ground of a believer's hope, ver. 16—18.

Ver. 16. *For men indeed swear by one who is greater, and to them an oath for confirmation is an end of all contradiction* [1].

Oaths amongst men are an appeal to God, the searcher of hearts and the judge of all, for the truth of a declaration; and what a man solemnly avers or promises upon oath is generally believed, and the oath silences all objection.

17. *Wherefore* [2], *God being willing very abundantly to manifest to the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, included it in an oath* [3].

Thus God himself, in great condescension to human infirmity, and to our imperfect mode of conception, and in order to impress upon the minds of believers a more deep and affecting sense of the value and of the immutability of his promise, made that

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[1] *An end of contradiction.*] αντιλογιας. "That the apostle is here speaking of promissory oaths," says Dr. Whitby, "is evident from the occasion of this discourse, viz. the promise made to Abraham. Now, these oaths being equally conducive to this good end in all ages, we have just reason to believe that Christianity allows of them for these ends." "The thing promised should be unquestionably good and in our power." Peirce.

[2] *Wherefore.*] εν ω. Peirce. "in which view." Wakefield. *i. e.* δια τουτο, *quam ob causam.*" Rosenmuller.

[3] *Included it in an oath.*] εμεσιτευσεν ὁρκῳ. "placed his promise, as it were, in the middle of an oath." Peirce; which is the sense given by the Syriac version. "*μεσ. intervenire, et speciatim, intervenire jurejurando: interponere jusjurandum.*" Rosenmuller. "interposed an oath." Wakefield. "by an oath." Newcome; who explains it, "transacted the matter between himself and mankind."

promise the subject of an oath; and sware by his own great and venerable name that he would confer the most important blessings upon the posterity of the believing patriarch, provided that they became the heirs of his faith and expectants of the promises. Ch. VI. Ver. 17.

That by two immutable things, in which it was *impossible for God to deceive, we might have strong encouragement*[4], *who have fled for refuge*[5] *to lay hold on the hope set before us*[6]. 18.

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[4] *We might have strong encouragement.*] It is asked who are we to understand by *we*? Probably, the Hebrew believers only; for to Abraham and his posterity only was the promise made, which was confirmed by oath. And as the author is only addressing the believing Hebrews, it is not at all necessary to suppose, with Peirce, that he is speaking of Gentile converts only, or, with Sykes and others, that he includes all believers, all who are the spiritual seed of Abraham. The discourse will be more intelligible if the words are restricted to Hebrews only. They were the natural posterity of Abraham; to them, as such, was that promise made, which was confirmed by an oath; to them that promise was now fulfilled by the mission of Jesus as the Messiah, and by the new dispensation which he hath introduced, confirmed by the promise and the oath of God: he earnestly exhorts the believing Hebrews to flee for refuge both from the old and worn out dispensation which was just about to be dissolved, ch. viii. 13, and from the danger of unbelief and apostasy, which he had just described, ch. vi. 1—9.

[5] *Who have fled for refuge:*] as the man-slayer to the city of refuge from the avenger of blood, Numb. xxxv. 6, Josh. xxi. 27. See Grotius. The idea is beautifully illustrated by Dr. Doddridge: "Thither (to the hope of the gospel) let us flee for our lives; flee, as if we heard the footsteps of the avenger of blood just behind us, and our lives depended upon the speed of the present moment."

[6] *The hope set before us:*] the new dispensation, the gospel, the foundation of hope. "κρατησαι, *i. e.* εις το κρατησαι, *qui eo confugimus, ut firmiter teneamus spem nobis propositam, nempe evangelio.*" Rosenmuller. "to lay hold of Christ, who is the

Ch. VI. Ver. 18. This condescension of God, in ratifying his promise by his oath, is intended for our encouragement and consolation, who are the heirs of this precious promise. For we, lying under a sentence of condemnation by the law, and fleeing from the avenger of blood to the gospel of Jesus, as to a city of refuge, could hardly be induced to think ourselves secure if our feeble wavering hopes were not confirmed and established by the most solemn and explicit declarations of the God of eternal truth: but, relying upon his unchangeable covenant, we now banish every fear.

8. The hope of believers is now fixed upon that state of blessedness of which Jesus is gone to take possession in their name, ver. 19, 20.

19. *Which* hope *we keep fast as an anchor of the soul both steady and strong, and which also entereth within the veil*[1].

This confidence in the divine promise is an anchor, firm and strong, which will never fail, and which keeps our little bark safe and steady amidst the billows of affliction and persecution: and this hope penetrates within the veil and fixes itself upon

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hope proposed to us. Hope is here put for the object of hope." Peirce.

[1] *Entereth within the veil.*] "Hope is to the soul in the midst of temptations, what an anchor is to a ship tossed about in the sea; it is a stay upon which we may rely firm and sure; and it is what will lead us to heaven itself, that true Holy of holies which lies within the veil: *i. e.* that part of the tabernacle which was behind or within the second veil." Sykes.

the throne of God: the great object of it being a state of eternal peace and happiness in the divine presence. Ch. VI. Ver. 19.

Whither our *forerunner hath entered for us*, even *Jesus, made a high-priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec*[2]. 20.

And this allusion to the veil of the temple, which separates the holy from the most holy place, brings me back to the subject of my discourse: for into this holy of holies, where God resides, has Jesus our forerunner already entered, as a pattern of the high honour and felicity to which his faithful followers are hereafter to be admitted; and, if I may so express it, to plead their cause and to assert their right in consequence of the gracious promise of God, and even to take possession of it in their name, in order to bestow it hereafter upon his victorious and persevering followers. Thus officiating in the double capacity of a king and a priest, after the example of his prototype Melchisedec.

III.

The writer, returning from his digression, proceeds to state at large that the dignity of Jesus, as a priest after the order of Melchisedec, is greatly superior to that of the Levitical priesthood, which institution he is therefore commissioned to supersede. Ch. vii. Ch. VII.

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[2] *Order of Melchisedec.*] "The author returns to his subject from which he had digressed. Ch. v. 11." Newcome.

CH. VII. 1. He argues the superiority of Melchisedec to Abraham and Levi, ver. 1—10.

We have had repeated occasion to remark, in the course of this epistle, how frequently the writer rests his argument upon the ambiguity of words, and reasons from passages in the Old Testament which, in their primary sense, bear no relation to the subject of his discourse. This mode of reasoning is evidently inconclusive, and in the present enlightened age is altogether discarded; but it was admired and approved in the age when this epistle was written, and was probably well adapted to the crude conceptions and to the inveterate prejudices of the simple and illiterate Hebrews.

The paragraph which we are now about to consider is a remarkable instance of that kind of loose, allegorical, and verbal reasoning to which I allude. The design of the writer is sufficiently obvious; so likewise is the weakness and inconclusiveness of his argument.

But learned expositors having first assumed as a principle, that the epistle is under the impulse of inspiration, and then seeing that the obvious sense of the author is inconsistent with this supposition, have puzzled themselves to invent a meaning less repugnant to their groundless hypothesis: and it is curious to observe the difficulties into which they plunge themselves by their respective systems. Some have thought that the whole history of Melchisedec was an allegory; others have fancied that Melchisedec was the holy ghost, or Jesus Christ in his

pre-existent state; or some other celestial spirit, who upon this occasion appeared to Abraham; or, that he was Shem the son of Noah [1]. Whereas the truth is, that the author has taken a very plain and simple narrative from the Old Testament, and has, by a fanciful comment, strained it to his purpose of proving the superiority of Christ to Aaron, and to the whole order of Levitical priests: and it is far better to acknowledge at once that this mode of reasoning is injudicious and inconclusive, than to expose the evidences of Christianity to the scoffs of unbelievers, by first pleading for the plenary inspiration of the sacred writers, and then, in order to save their credit, annexing such a meaning to their language as every man of understanding must see to be foreign to the author's design. Ch. VII.

Without therefore pretending to justify [2] the au-

[1] *Shem the son of Noah.*] This was the interpretation of the Jewish rabbis. See Whitby. That very learned and very honest writer enumerates, and thinks it worth his while to confute, these absurd suppositions.

[2] *Without pretending to justify.*] "Because the allegorical writers of the Jews," says Le Clerc, "at that time accommodated innumerable passages to the Messiah, not relying upon any grammatical interpretations, but a certain old custom of explaining the scripture after this manner, and because they interpreted Psalm cx. of the Messiah, the sacred writer makes use of that interpretation to his purpose: and because they acknowledged the Messiah ought to be like Melchisedec, he reasons against them from their own concessions, not against other men who might have denied what he affirmed. Otherwise, if the thing be considered in itself, no stronger grammatical argument can be drawn against others from that history: and therefore such things are not to be too much urged now, because that way of explaining scripture is gone out of use." See Whitby on Heb. vii. 1.

"In

Ch. VII. thor's reasoning, I shall proceed to state that reasoning as it is; but for the better understanding his meaning, I shall first introduce that very brief account of Melchisedec which is contained Gen. xiv. 18—20.

"And Melchisedec, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was priest of the most high God, and he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the most high God who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hands; and Abram gave him tithes of all *the spoils*."

This is all that is said concerning this celebrated person in the Old Testament, except Psalm cx. 4, supposed to be addressed to the Messiah: "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." It is from this account that the author of the epistle draws his parallel.

1. He introduces a parabolical description of this eminent person, ver. 1—3.

Ver. 1. *For this Melchisedec*[1], *king of Salem*[2], *priest*

"In his observations upon this subject," says Dr. Priestley, "we find more of imagination than of judgement: it proceeds, however, upon such an application of the scriptures as the Jews were accustomed to, and laid much stress upon; and therefore would have weight with those to whom he wrote, as I doubt not they had with himself; but this should not prevent our judging for ourselves, and rejecting whatever does not appear to be sufficiently well founded: and there is nothing that is more open to objection than his reasoning concerning Melchisedec."

[1] *For this Melchisedec.*] Jesus is a priest after the order of

of the most high God, who met Abraham returning Ch. VII.
from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him,
to whom even Abraham divided a tenth part *of all* Ver. 2.
the spoils, *being first by interpretation king of*
righteousness, and then king of Salem also, which
is, king of peace, without recorded *father*[3] *or* 3.
mother, and without priestly *pedigree, having nei-*
ther beginning of days nor end of life[4]*, but re-*

Melchisedec. "*For* this Melchisedec resembles Christ in many respects." Newcome. "It does not appear," says Dr. Priestley, "that Melchisedec was more of a priest than Abraham was. He was a petty prince; and in these times all princes were likewise priests of their several tribes, and occasionally offered sacrifices as did Abraham."

[2] *King of Salem*:] Probably Jerusalem. See Ps. lxxvi. 2. "Jerom says, that Salem was a village near Scythopolis, where the ruins of Melchisedec's palace were still to be seen." Sykes.

[3] *Without* recorded *father*.] "Without *recorded* mother." Newcome. Elsner *Obs. Sac.* ver. 2, p. 347, shows that it was usual to apply the words απατωρ, αμητωρ, to persons whose parents were unknown; and he rightly interprets the text as expressing that the name of Melchisedec was not to be found in the genealogies of the priests. To explain the text as comparing Jesus to Melchisedec, because he had no mother in his divine nature, and no father in his human nature, is unworthy of the good sense of some expositors who have given this interpretation. See Peirce and Doddridge. Mr. Wakefield translates the passage thus: "of whose father, mother, pedigree, birth, and death, there is no account."

[4] *Neither beginning of days nor end of life*.] The priests under the law began their ministrations at thirty years of age, and ended when they were fifty. See Numb. iv. The writer means that there is no recorded limitation of Melchisedec's priesthood Mr. Peirce would render αρχην by *omnino prorsus*, and translates the text thus: "having plainly neither an end of days nor of life." He argues, that it would not be proper to say, that Melchisedec resembled the Son of God in not having a beginning of the days of his priesthood, because we certainly know when the days of the priesthood of Christ began, viz. at his resurrection. This, however, will not be universally allowed. And

Ch. VII. Ver. 3. *sembling the son of God*[1] *remaineth a priest continually.*

Having just remarked that Jesus is a perpetual high-priest after the order of Melchisedec, I proceed now to state more particularly the circumstances of resemblance: and in recurring to the brief history of this distinguished character in the book of Genesis, you may observe that he was both a king and a priest, and that his very name and titles express that he was a righteous and a peaceful prince; he blessed Abraham and received tithes from him; he had no title to his office by descent and pedigree; and as there is no report either of his birth or death, this eminent person, to whom we have compared the son of God, may be figuratively regarded as a living and perpetual priest: at least, as no account is given of any successor to him in office, we may presume that he had none.

2. The writer argues the superiority of Melchisedec to Abraham, ver. 4—7.

4. *Now consider how great this man* was[2], *to whom*

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it is sufficient for the writer's purpose that Melchisedec had no antecedent and no successor.

[1] *Resembling the Son of God.*] The eighth verse is a commentary upon this clause. Nothing is said of Melchisedec's death: therefore we may suppose him alive, that he is still exercising his office, and that no one is to succeed him.

[2] *Consider how great this man* was.] The superiority of Melchisedec to Abraham is here inferred from his taking tithes of him. "But though," says Dr. Priestley in his note upon ver. 1, "Abraham gave Melchisedec a tenth of the spoils which he had recovered from the kings whom he had defeated, it does not

even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth part *of the spoils.* Ch. VII. Ver. 4.

If he who receives the tribute is greater in office and higher in dignity than he who pays it, you must acknowledge the superiority of Melchisedec even to Abraham our great and honoured ancestor.

And indeed those of the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood, have authority[3] *under the law to take tithes of the people, that is, of their own brethren, though sprung from the stock of Abraham; but he whose pedigree*[4] *is not* reckoned *from them, received tithes from Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. Now, without all contradiction, the inferior is blessed by the superior*[5]. 5. 6. 7.

Those descendants of Levi who hold the priestly office, namely the posterity of Aaron, are authorized by the law of Moses to receive tithes, and thus are elevated to an official superiority over their brethren, descended from the same ancestor, the patriarch Abraham: and they claim their dues upon the ground of their descent from the stock of Aaron. But Melchisedec had no such pedigree to plead,

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appear that he gave it with any religious view, or as any thing which was due to him. It was perhaps to indemnify him for what he had suffered from the incursions of those kings."

[3] *Authority.*] "εντολην, *permission.* John x. 18, Matt. xix. 7, 8, compared with Mark x. 4, 5." Peirce.

[4] *Whose pedigree.*] "whose genealogy is not reckoned from the same stock with them." Newcome.

[5] *The inferior by the superior.*] το ελαττον for ὁ ελαττων, *the less by the greater.* See John vi. 37. "He who blesses is supposed to be in higher favour with God." Newcome. "Though Pharaoh was blessed by Jacob, the superiority of the patriarch consisted in nothing more than his greater age." Priestley.

Ch. VII. Ver. 7. and yet he received tithes from Abraham himself, our great progenitor. And what still more strongly proves the superiority of his rank, he even pronounced a blessing upon him, upon the very man to whom the promise was made, *that in him all nations should be blessed:* and Abraham himself submitted to be blessed by Melchisedec; and thus, as all will allow, acknowledged in that royal priest an official superiority. For it is the superior that pronounces, and the inferior that receives, the blessing.

3. The superiority of Melchisedec is further argued from his being represented as a living priest, ver. 8.

8. *And in one case men who die receive tithes, but in the other he* received them, *concerning whom it is testified that he liveth*[1].

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[1] *He liveth.*] *i. e.* nothing is mentioned in the history of Melchisedec concerning his death. "The difference here considered is, that of men who *die*, and of one of whom it is witnessed that he *liveth*. Men that die have their successors, to whom tithes are paid: but Melchisedec is not said to have any successor; but himself to continue a priest for ever. So much then as a priest for ever is superior to a successive priesthood, so much must that of Melchisedec excel that of Aaron." Sykes.

It is not to be supposed that the author of the epistle was so weak as to believe that Melchisedec never died, and that he was, at the time when the epistle was written, a living priest; but he ingeniously seizes upon every circumstance, and every expression, in the brief history of that eminent person, which can by any means be twisted so as to serve his purpose of illustrating the superiority of the priesthood of Melchisedec, which is that of the Messiah, to the priesthood of Aaron, which is that of the law.

It is observable that the writer speaks of the Jewish priests as at *that time* receiving tithes; and that here, and upon all

The priests, the descendants of Aaron, are dying men, and the priesthood is transmitted from generation to generation: but Melchisedec has no successor: he appears in the history as a living priest; and though there can be no doubt that he died many ages ago, yet, as he is represented in the history as a living man, and no mention is made of his death, we may take advantage of this circumstance in explaining the similitude, and may in our imaginations conceive of Melchisedec as exercising an immortal priesthood. Ch. VII. Ver. 8.

4. Melchisedec's superiority is further argued, as the Levitical priests themselves, who received tithes, virtually paid tithes to him, ver. 9, 10.

And, if I may use the expression[2], *even Levi, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes through Abraham,* 9.

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occasions, he, without any affectation, alludes to the temple service as then existing; which is a proof that the epistle was written in the apostolic age, and though not penned by Paul, the style proving the contrary, was probably written by an apostolic man, and contains apostolic doctrine, though shrouded and obscured by allegorical interpretations and inconclusive reasonings.

[2] *If I may use the expression.*] ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, "in a manner." Wakefield. He softens the harsh expression of Levi paying tithes before he was born, by a qualifying clause equivalent to the Latin phrase *ut ita dicam*. Grotius and Raphelius *in loc.* If there was any validity in the argument, it would prove, as has been often observed, that Melchisedec was superior to Christ as well as to Levi. See Whitby on the place, who guards against the conclusion which some are disposed to draw, that all the posterity of Adam sinned in him, as being in the loins of Adam when he sinned.

Ch. VII. Ver. 10. *for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met* Abraham.

I will mention another argument in favour of the superiority of Melchisedec to Aaron and his descendants; but I do not indeed profess to lay any great stress upon it. Isaac was not begotten when Abraham paid tithes; and therefore all the descendants of Abraham by Isaac, and consequently Levi and all his posterity, including the priests of the house of Aaron, who are themselves the receivers of tithes according to the law, may be considered as having paid tithes in the person of their great progenitor: thus virtually acknowledging the superiority of the order of Melchisedec to that of Aaron, and consequently the superior dignity of the priesthood of Christ to that of the descendants of Levi.

II. The writer infers, from the premises which he has advanced, that the Levitical dispensation is to be superseded, and a new dispensation to be introduced under the direction of a superior priesthood, ver. 11—28.

1. The Levitical dispensation is to be superseded, ver. 11—19.

1.) He draws this conclusion from the change which is to take place in the nature and character of the priesthood itself, ver. 11, 12.

11. *Now if perfection*[1] *were* to be obtained *by the*

[1] *If perfection.*] The word τελειωσις only occurs once more

Levitical priesthood, concerning which[2] *the people received a law, what further need* was there *that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchisedec, and that he should not be called according*[3] *to the order of Aaron? For if the priesthood be changed, there is of necessity a change of the law also*[4]. Ch. VII. Ver. 11. 12.

If the promise which had been made to our great ancestor Abraham, that all the families of the earth should be blessed in him, could have been accomplished by the ministry of the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who were instituted agreeably to the

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in the New Testament, viz. Luke i. 45. It is there used in the sense of the fulfilment of prophecy, and is translated, There shall be performance of those things which were told her. The word is probably used in the same sense in the present connexion. *q. d.* "If a full accomplishment of the things promised had been made by the Levitical priesthood, there would have been no need of any other priesthood to come after it." Peirce.

[2] *Concerning which.*] επ' αυτη. See this translation vindicated by Peirce. It was an observation of little moment, and indeed hardly consistent with truth, that the law was given under the Levitical priesthood; but it was of great importance to remark, that the law concerning the priesthood was so interwoven with the whole Mosaic institute, that one could not subsist without the other: so that, to supersede the priesthood was to abolish the law.

[3] *And not according.*] Mill and Wakefield reject the last clause of the eleventh verse upon the authority of the Æthiopic version, "but evidently without reason," says Dr. Owen, *ap.* Bowyer.

[4] *There is of necessity a change of the law.*] "How does this follow? The truth is, so much of the law concerns the priesthood immediately, all their sacrifices, purifications, the great day of atonement, and the temple service, that, supposing these to be set aside or abolished, their law itself may properly be said to be changed." Sykes.

Ch. VII. Ver. 12. laws given by Moses concerning them, there would surely have been no occasion for the introduction of a priesthood of a different order, with different offices, privileges, and powers. There must have been some singularly important reason why the inspired Psalmist should have announced the future appointment of a priest after the order of Melchisedec, rather than that of Aaron. For you cannot but observe that the necessary consequence of a change in the nature and functions of the sacerdotal office is the abrogation of the whole Mosaic institution; the very being of which depends upon the continuation of an order of priests similar to that which was originally appointed by Moses. So that a prophecy of the change of the priesthood is in effect a notice from the highest authority that the law itself would be repealed.

2.) The argument is further corroborated by the consideration, that this predicted priest was not to be of the Aaronic family, but of a different tribe, ver. 13, 14.

13. *Moreover, he of whom*[1] *these things are spoken belongeth to another tribe, out of which no one gave*
14. *attendance at the altar. For* it was *plain of old*[2]

[1] *He of whom.*] εφ' ὁν for περι ὃ. *q. d.* the high-priest, of whom these things are spoken: see ver. 6. Dr. Owen *apud* Bowyer.

[2] It was *plain of old.*] Mr. Peirce justifies this sense of the word προδηλον, as distinguished from καταδηλον in the next verse. Mr. Wakefield also adopts it, and mentions it as the interpretation given by the Æthiopic translator.

that our Lord was to spring[3] *out of Judah*[4], *with respect to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood.* Ch. VII. Ver. 14.

A change of the functions of the priestly office must have involved in it a change of the law; but the scriptures foretell not only a change of the functions, but even of the family of the priests: for you cannot but admit, as our whole nation doth, that the cxth Psalm is a prophecy of the Messiah. Now it is allowed by all that the Messiah was to descend from the tribe of Judah and from the family of David, who were by law prohibited from exercising any of the functions of the priestly office. But the existence of the Mosaic institute depends upon the continuance of the family of Aaron, for the law makes no provision for a succession of priests if that line should fail[5]. The prophecy, therefore,

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[3] *Was to spring.*] ανατεταλκε, *was to spring*: this is Mr. Wakefield's translation, which the connexion requires. "Grammarians observe, that the preterperfect is sometimes used for the present." Peirce.

[4] *Out of Judah.*] That the Messiah was to descend from the tribe of Judah was inferred from the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10. That he was expected to be the descendant of David, who was of the tribe of Judah, is also apparent from Matt. xxii. 42, Luke xx. 41.

[5] *The law made no provision for a succession of priests.*] This is a remarkable fact, and a presumptive evidence of the consciousness of the divine authority under which the Jewish lawgiver acted. After the death of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron had but two sons left, Eleazar and Ithamar; and as the whole Jewish polity depended upon the continuance of the priesthood, a person who had legislated upon the principles of human prudence only, would have made some provision for a succession of priests, if the line of Aaron should fail.

Ch. VII. Ver. 14. which foretells the transfer of the priestly office into another family, does in effect announce the abolition of the law of Moses.

3.) This conclusion is further strengthened by the prediction of the perpetuity of that priest, who was the object of the prophecy, ver. 15—17.

15. *And this is still far more evident, if another priest ariseth*[1], *according to the similitude of Mel-*
16. *chisedec; who becometh such, not according to the law of a carnal*[2] *commandment, but according to*
17. *the power of an indissoluble life. For* the scripture *testifieth,* " *Thou* art *a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec.*"

There is another circumstance which proves the abolition of the Mosaic institute still more strongly than any which I have already mentioned. Whether Melchisedec himself be alive or dead, it is evi-

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[1] *If another priest ariseth.*] *ει, if.* Owen *apud* Bowyer, Whitby, Peirce, and Newcome, give *ει* the sense of *ὁτι, that,* or *because.* With Sykes, I adhere to its usual sense *if, q. d.* " it is still more evident that the law must be changed *if* a priest ariseth who is never to die, but to live for ever."

[2] *Carnal.*] *σαρκινης.* Griesbach. The law concerning the priesthood is called a carnal commandment, because the priests who were appointed by it were frail and dying men; whereas that which appointed Jesus as high-priest was a law which supposed the person so appointed, to possess immortal life and vigour, for it ordains him to be an everlasting priest. See Peirce, and Macknight, and Whitby. " A carnal commandment is opposed to the power of an indissoluble life. A carnal commandment, therefore, is a law which concerns the flesh that dies: whereas a priesthood for ever, does not depend upon flesh, which in the common course of things soon comes to an end." Sykes.

dent that the person typified by him, and who was to be appointed a priest, according to his similitude and order, is not like the priests of the line of Aaron, constituted by a law which supposes the priest to be a frail and dying man, and which provides successors accordingly, but by an edict which implies that he should possess immortal life and energy. For this is the strain of the prophetic declaration, this is the language of the salutation addressed to him by Jehovah: "Thou art an everlasting priest, according to the order of Melchisedec." Ch. VII. Ver. 17.

4.) The incompetency of the Mosaic ritual is a further and sufficient reason for its abrogation, ver. 18, 19.

There is, therefore, an abolition[3] *of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, (for the law made nothing perfect*[4]*,)* 18. 19.

[3] *There is an abolition.*] The opposition does not lie between the two clauses of ver. 19, as is commonly supposed, but between that and ver. 18, including the clause *for the law made nothing perfect* in a parenthesis, and γινεται being understood. Peirce says, the construction seems to have been mistaken by all commentators. This construction is adopted by Estius, Bengelius, Markland (see Bowyer), Newcome, Wakefield.

[4] *The law made nothing perfect.*] "The apostle," says Dr. Sykes, "teaches that the law made *nothing*, i. e. *no man*, perfect: he considers it as what it was, instituted for temporal purposes; and consequently unfit and unable to attain the ends which the Jews expected from it. They expected to be justified by God by their observance of the law. No, says the apostle, the law did not propose to make the observers perfect; and therefore the Hebrews ought to recur to Christ." "The law was unfit and unable to make the priesthood perfect, for it made

Ch. VII. Ver. 19. *but an introduction of a better hope* [1] *by which we draw near to God* [2].

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nothing perfect, and if it made nothing perfect it could not make the priesthood so, or confer the advantages to be expected from the office." Peirce.

Neither of these ingenious and learned expositors appears to me to have correctly apprehended the writer's meaning. Addressing the Hebrews upon their own principles, he argues the superiority of the new covenant by Christ, over the old one introduced by Moses; and contrasts the perfection of the priesthood of Christ, with the imperfection of that of Aaron. Both covenants agree in this, that no provision is made for the wilful transgressor. The soul that sinneth it shall die, is the language of the old covenant. And if a man sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, is the doctrine of the new.

But under the law there were many ways by which a person contracted ceremonial pollution, such as touching a dead body and the like, for recovery from which, provision was made by certain sacrifices and ablutions, by which they were restored to ceremonial purity: but the neglect of which excluded them from the pale and privileges of the commonwealth of Israel. Now it is obvious that many of these ceremonial pollutions might be contracted through inadvertence unknown to the parties themselves; and in the course of a year there would hardly be a single individual Israelite who had not through inadvertence forfeited his privileges as a member of the community of Israel. To obviate this calamity the annual day of atonement was appointed, for sins of ignorance only, Heb. ix. 7, when the high-priest entered into the holy of holies, and sprinkled the blood of the victim before the mercy-seat, after having made a confession of the sins of the people, and having laid his hand upon the head of the scape-goat, which was afterwards sent into the wilderness as a symbol that the sins so atoned were done away: while the sprinkling of the blood indicated that the covenant was renewed, and the congregation reconsecrated. See Lev. xvi. This institution, however, was imperfect, for, 1. It required annual repetition. 2. The priest was obliged to offer a sacrifice annually for himself as well as for the people. 3. The priest was mortal, and the office successive.

In all these views the new covenant greatly excelled the old. 1. The one sacrifice of Christ was equal to all the sacrifices of

The arguments which I have advanced plainly prove, notwithstanding the strong prepossession of Ch. VII. Ver. 19.

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the law: it consecrated both himself and his followers once for all, so that under the new dispensation there are no ceremonial pollutions, no sins of ignorance; but the individual who is once admitted into the Christian community can never be excluded from it but by his own voluntary transgression. 2. The high-priest is perfect, and being once consecrated is consecrated for ever. 3. He is immortal, and being at the right hand of God in heaven, he is ever present in the celestial holy of holies, interceding, that is, officiating as a priest in the most holy place, so that the benefit of his redemption extends to every believer through every age.

In this manner the author of this epistle carries on a very ingenious parallel between the Aaronic priesthood and the priesthood of Christ, to the great advantage of the latter, in order to soften the prejudices of his Hebrew readers: all the while meaning nothing more than that the dispensation introduced by Christ relieves those who yield obedience to it from the yoke, the ceremonies and the sacrifices of the law, that it requires nothing but the practice of virtue, and is intended to last for ever.

With this key, if I mistake not, it will be easy to understand the scope, the reasonings, and the allusions of this writer, and to see how little foundation this celebrated epistle lays for the modern unscriptural doctrine of atonement, of which it is thought to be the main support, and upon which many lay such an unwarrantable stress.

[1] *An introduction of a better hope.*] The new dispensation is here called a better hope, because it leads us to hope for that perfection which the law could not reach: a perfect priest, a perfect service, an immutable and everlasting covenant, from the blessings of which nothing can exclude but wilful disobedience.

[2] *By which we draw near to God.*] Under this new covenant we have access to God, as reconciled through his son. All our past ceremonial and legal offences are forgiven: with the true Israel of God we are admitted into the holy place, where we take our stand as acceptable and approved worshipers, separated from the unholy and unclean: no longer needing an annual atonement for legal transgression, but continually abiding in the love and favour of God, unless we exclude ourselves by actual transgression.

Ch. VII. Ver. 19. our nation to the contrary, that the dispensation of Moses is to be abrogated and annulled by the superior dispensation of the Messiah: and it is fit that it should be so; for the dispensation of rites and ceremonies was not able to fulfill the elevated expectations which the promises of God to our pious ancestors, and particularly to Abraham, justly excite. I have shown that the Levitical priesthood is imperfect and inadequate to the desired end. And no wonder, for the law could make nothing perfect; and though it answered a temporary purpose, and was partially beneficial, it fell far short, both in extent and in degree, of the complete accomplishment of the promise. This dispensation therefore is justly set aside, and a new œconomy is introduced, which lays a foundation for better hopes, and will be productive of far more extensive and durable blessings: this is the dispensation of which Christ is the head, by which not merely a separate and privileged order of men, but all believers, without distinction, are admitted into the sanctuary of God, and are encouraged to approach the throne of mercy. In conformity to the institutions of this new and liberal dispensation, we now regulate our modes of worship, and by its merciful declarations we are authorized to regard the great object of our religious homage as a reconciled God, a father and a friend, from whose favour nothing can separate us but our own voluntary transgression.

2. The great superiority of Jesus, the high-priest

of the new dispensation, is illustrated and established, ver. 20—28. Ch. VII. Ver. 19.

1.) He was inaugurated with an oath, ver. 20—22.

Moreover, inasmuch as he was *not* made a high-priest *without an oath, (for they indeed were made priests without an oath, but this with an oath, by him who said to him, The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou* art *a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec,) by so much was Jesus made the surety* [1] *of a more excellent covenant* [2]. 20. 21. 22.

Having proved, from premises which cannot be controverted, that the Jewish scriptures themselves

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[1] *The surety.*] εγγυος, a *sponsor*, or *surety*: this is the only place in which the word occurs in the New Testament. The priests under the Mosaic covenant were sureties that God would perform his promises to the Jews, because they offered those sacrifices which were the appointed ratification of the divine promise. Jesus is the surety of the new covenant, because his blood ratifies the promises of it. See Peirce.

[2] *More excellent covenant.*] διαθηκη, a *covenant*, the usual sense of the word improperly rendered *testament*. The Mosaic dispensation was the old covenant, in which the contracting parties were God and the Jewish nation: the promise of the covenant was the possession of Palestine: the conditions of the contract were, abstaining from idolatry and obedience to the ceremonial law: the sanction and seal of the covenant was the blood of the victims.

The Christian dispensation is the new covenant, in which God and believers are the contracting parties: the promise of the covenant is a resurrection to immortality: the conditions of this covenant are faith and obedience: the mediator and surety of the covenant is Jesus Christ, and the sanction and seal of it is his blood shed upon the cross. "The reasoning is," says Dr. Sykes, "the more solemn and awful the manner is in which any one is appointed to his office, the more important is the office."

Ch. VII. Ver. 22. announce the abolition of the institution of Moses, and the introduction of another and better order of things, I now advance to state, upon grounds equally satisfactory, that Jesus, the high-priest of this new dispensation, sustains an office of far greater dignity than any of the priests, the descendants of Aaron: and my first argument is taken from the superior solemnity with which Jesus was inaugurated into his sacred office. It cannot indeed be denied that Aaron and his posterity were, by divine direction, selected and consecrated to exercise the office of priests under the Mosaic institution: and this was no doubt a very solemn designation. But the solemnity with which Jesus was publicly announced to this high and holy office was far superior: for when the inspired psalmist foretells the priesthood of the Messiah, he declares, in the name of God, that this appointment is confirmed and ratified by the immutable oath of God himself. And as the appointment of the priesthood under the Mosaic dispensation was a proof and pledge of the mercy of God to his chosen people, and of his willingness to maintain a gracious intercourse with them, and to fulfill his promises to them, so is the appointment of Jesus, the true Messiah, as the high-priest of the new dispensation, a pledge of the faithfulness of God to that covenant of mercy into which all believers are now introduced, and of the full accomplishment of all the great and precious promises contained in it: and the superior solemnity of his inauguration proves a proportionable superiority

both in the importance of its blessings, and in the dignity of him who is the pledge and surety of its promises. Ch. VII. Ver. 22.

Observe here, 1. That the gospel dispensation is called a covenant, an engagement between two contracting parties, and not a testament, or will, to which it is difficult to annex any distinct idea. In this covenant God promises to all who believe, eternal life, as the reward of faithful obedience. This is a notion which the author here introduces incidentally, and upon which he afterwards insists at large.

2. Of this covenant Jesus is the surety: not as though the promise of God could not be credited without the addition of human security, much less can it be supposed that the writer means to insinuate, as some strangely maintain, that Jesus is surety for the sinner's debt, or a substitute to bear the divine wrath in the sinner's stead: but Jesus is the surety of the gospel covenant, first, because his mission is a proof and pledge of the divine mercy; and secondly, because his death was the seal, or solemn ratification, of the evangelical promise. This is the topic upon which the writer enlarges in the succeeding chapters.

2.) The priesthood of Christ is perpetual, ver. 23—25.

And those priests indeed were many, because they were hindered from continuing by death; but 23. 24.

Ch. VII. Ver. 25. *he, because he continueth for ever, retaineth the priesthood without succession*[1]: *whence also he is able to save completely*[2] *those who approach to God through him, as he ever liveth to intercede for them*[3].

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[1] *Without succession.*] ἀπαράβατον, "a priesthood that does never pass from one to another. The Aaronical priests were many and successive; but our high-priest, by reason of his continuance for ever, exercises an unchangeable priesthood. This is another reason for the superior excellence of the Christian covenant." Sykes.

[2] *To save completely.*] σωζειν εις το παντελες, παν τελος εχων —εις παντελες, *prorsus, perfectè, plenè, consummatè, omnino.*" Schleusner. "Christ living for ever himself could save for ever them that came to God through him. Παντελες always signifies *completely.*" Sykes.

The writer is here running a parallel between the functions of the Aaronic high-priest and Jesus Christ the high-priest of our profession, in order to show the great superiority of the latter. The Aaronic priests, in their successive generations, on the day of atonement sanctified the people, and restored to the commonwealth of Israel those who had forfeited their privileges by sins of ignorance: ch. ix. 7. Christ is an immortal high-priest; he ever lives to save completely those who approach to God through him. Believers in the gospel are saved through Christ; by faith in him they are rescued from the bondage of idolatry and vice, and from the condemning sentence of the law. They *draw near to God* through him: they become a holy people, admitted to worship in the holy place; separated by their profession from the unbelieving world. If they apostatize, they are turned out of the sanctuary into the congregation of unbelievers, and delivered over to Satan: but if they do not wilfully transgress, nothing can exclude them from the new covenant. Under the law, sins of ignorance excluded from the Mosaic covenant; to the blessings of which they were restored by the offices of the high-priest on the day of atonement. Not so under the gospel: no sins of ignorance, no involuntary violations of ritual precepts, exclude from the new covenant. Christ has completely saved his disciples from all lapses of this kind; and as he lives for ever, so the benefits of his salvation extend to all his followers to the end of time.

[3] *He ever liveth to intercede for them.*] εντυγχανω is a word

The descendants of Aaron were frail and mortal, and provision was made for the transmission of Ch. VII. Ver. 25.

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of very general import. It signifies *to interpose* in any way, either ὑπερ *for*, or κατα *against*, another. See Sykes. Mr. Wakefield renders it, "to manage their concerns for them." He refers to Epictetus, sect. 40, and to Heb. ix. 24; and observes, "there is no need of authorities to establish this sense of the word. It is applied to Christ only twice in the New Testament, here and Rom. viii. 34; and upon the slender foundation of these two texts is built the modern and popular doctrine of Christ's intercession, and pleading with the Father the merits of his blood and righteousness: a doctrine upon which many lay a mighty stress, though it is no where to be found in scripture.

I have ventured to use the word *intercede*, taking it in the sense of a learned writer in the *Commentaries and Essays*, vol. ii. p. 265; viz. "to officiate, to discharge the office of a high-priest on their behalf." The Jewish high-priest on the day of atonement was to sprinkle the blood of the victim upon, and before, the mercy-seat. See Lev. xvi. 19. He was not instructed to offer any prayer or to utter a word. By this action he *interceded, interposed*, did all that God required for the people, and they were *atoned, reconciled, restored* to covenant, which they had lost by sins of ignorance. But Christ is the Christian high-priest, who is passed into the heavens to the right hand of God, into the holy of holies; where he appears, not like the Jewish high-priest for a short time, once in a year, but continually and for ever. And by this appearance alone, without any verbal address or any external act, he *intercedes;* and accomplishes that purpose completely, and for ever, which the Jewish high-priest effected on the day of atonement only, viz. preserving a memorial, that all legal offences had ceased, and that nothing but their own voluntary apostasy can exclude his followers from the privileges of the covenant.

Not that any thing real, or virtual, is said or done by the Christian high-priest; or that our Lord ever, properly speaking, performs the office of high-priest at all, any more than he sustains the character of a shepherd, a householder, or a husbandman. Nothing of this sort occurs in any other portion of the Christian scriptures, and here it is only introduced metaphorically by this ingenious but unknown writer; who pursues the figure as far as it will bear, for no other purpose than to reconcile the Hebrew believers to the offensive doctrine of a crucified Messiah.

Ch. VII. Ver. 25. their office from generation to generation: but the priest who is solemnly introduced as invested with an office similar to that of Melchisedec, is at the same time announced as one who was to exercise a perpetual priesthood. Nor is any provision made for a successor to him in office, nor any notice given of the introduction of a succeeding dispensation. Such a priest is Jesus: being raised from the dead, he lives for ever: to him therefore no successor is nominated; and to the end of time all who are as it were introduced by him into the sanctuary of God, shall derive from him all the blessings which in his sacerdotal capacity he is authorized to confer; because he is already in the most holy place, where he will ever be engaged in the duties of his sacred office. In other words, since Christ is risen from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of God, the law of ceremonies is superseded, sins of ignorance are abolished, sacrifices and days of expiation are unnecessary, the office of a priest is superfluous, every thing which the law requires may be considered as accomplished in Jesus; and no believer to the end of time can ever be excluded from the benefits of the new dispensation but by his own voluntary act, by wilful presumptuous transgression.

3.) The qualifications of Jesus for the sacerdotal office are peculiar and transcendant, ver. 26—28.

26. *For such a high-priest suited us*[1], *who is holy,*

[1] *Such a high-priest suited us.*] " επρεπε, conveniebat, talem

harmless, unpolluted, separate from sinners[2], *and raised above the heavens*[3]. Ch. VII. Ver. 26.

The gospel dispensation being so much superior to that of Moses, required the ministrations of a superior high-priest; and such is that exalted high-priest whom God has appointed for us: eminent for his moral virtues as well as for his sacerdotal qualifications; pious towards God; benevolent to men; exempt from all ceremonial impurity; separated from the unholy and unbelieving world; set apart for the service of the spiritual sanctuary, and admitted into heaven itself, the most holy place, the immediate presence of God.

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pontificem nobis dari: necessarius nobis erat talis pontifex maximus." Rosenmuller. "became us." Public Version. "was proper for us." Wakefield. The superior dignity of the dispensation required a proportionate superiority in its chief officer.

[2] *Holy, harmless, unpolluted, separate from sinners.*] *holy,* ὁσιος, not ἁγιος. It expresses a moral quality, not a separation to the service of God. "*pious, merciful.*" Peirce. *Harmless,* ακακος. "If the former character be understood to express his respect to God, this may import his innocence towards men." Peirce. *Unpolluted,* αμιαντος. "This is analogous to what was prescribed for the high-priests under the old law; who were above all others to avoid legal defilements, and more especially on the great day of expiation, when they were to go into the most holy place." Peirce.—"*Qui non tantum pollutus non fuerit istis contaminationibus externis, sed nec ullo vitio.*" Rosenmuller. *Separate from sinners.* Free from all sin, ceremonial and moral: completely sanctified, and dedicated to God.

[3] *Raised above the heavens.*] "exalted above the angels." Peirce. But surely there can be no doubt that the writer alludes to what he had said a little before, ch. iv. 14, where he speaks of Christ as having passed into the heavens, as the high-priest into the most holy place.

Ch. VII. Ver. 26. The writer means nothing more than that Jesus is fully qualified for the office to which he is appointed; but in order to accommodate himself to the prejudices of the Jewish Christians, he uses language expressive of the qualifications of a Jewish high-priest, not meaning to be taken in a strict literal sense.

27. *Who needeth not from time to time* [1], *like those high-priests* [2], *first to offer sacrifices for his own sins, and after that for those of the people, for this he did once for all* [3], *when he offered up himself.*

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[1] *From time to time.*] καθ' ἡμέραν, *daily, from time to time.* The word is indefinite, and often used for time. The expression is equivalent to κατ' ἐνιαυτον (ch. x. 1.), *every year.* The day of atonement came but once a year. Peirce, Sykes.

[2] *Like those high-priests.*] The duty of the high-priest on the day of atonement is described Levit. xvi.; where he is required, first to offer a sacrifice for his own sins, and then for those of the people. But it was only for ceremonial pollution and sins of ignorance, not for voluntary transgressions. This is expressly stated Heb. ix. 7.

[3] *This he did once for all.*] τουτο γαρ εποιησεν. This text has greatly puzzled the commentators; and is indeed, when rightly understood, a complete refutation of the popular doctrine of the *atonement*: viz. that Christ died to expiate, or make atonement, or offer satisfaction, or appease the wrath of the Father for the sins, the moral offences of mankind. THIS HE DID once for all: What? The construction plainly requires, that the antecedent should be, '*he offered sacrifice first for* HIS OWN SINS, and after that for those of the people.' So Grotius: "*Videtur hic et supra dici* c. v. 3. *Christus quoque obtulisse non sæpius quidem, sed semel pro peccatis non populi tantum, sed et* SUIS." So Crellius: "*Principaliter hic de oblatione pro* ipsius pontificis peccatis *agi, ex superioribus, ipsoque rationum contextu manifestum est.*" To avoid, however, the shock which it would naturally give to the feelings of those who did not understand the author's meaning, and indeed in perfect consistency with their own mistaken views of the subject, most of the commentators introduce an exceptive clause, unwarranted by the text. So

You know that the high-priest every year, upon the day of atonement, first offers a sacrifice for his Ch. VII. Ver. 27.

So Peirce expounds the passage, "Who has no need, like the priests under the law, from time to time to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and after that for the people's. For this latter he did once for all, when he offered up himself; and as to the former, he had no occasion to do it at all." So also Sykes: "He had no sins of his own, and therefore could not offer for them." And Doddridge: "of the former of these he never had need, nor could there be any room for it: and this last he did once for all." See also Whitby, Rosenmuller, &c. And, no doubt, if the writer of the epistle had entertained the same ideas of the doctrine of the atonement which these learned and pious expositors did, he would have made the same reserve; whereas, as Crellius justly remarks, the context plainly points out the sins of the high-priest as the principal object.

In what sense, then, can it justly be said that Christ "offered up a sacrifice for his own sins?" It is universally agreed, that Christ in his moral character was sinless: it is impossible, therefore, that he should have offered sacrifice for his own moral offences, for he had none. Grotius and Crellius, by *the sins of Christ* understand his sufferings, which were terminated by his death: but this interpretation, unnatural in itself, is successfully opposed by Whitby. The plain interpretation is, that the sins of Christ were merely ceremonial, such as the high-priest was accustomed to expiate on the day of atonement: ch. ix. 7. Our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood: ver. 14. He was, therefore, as to the priesthood, in an unconsecrated state; that is, ceremonially a sinner. And as Aaron was consecrated to his priestly office by the blood of animal sacrifices, so Christ was consecrated to his nobler office by his own blood. In this sense he offered a sacrifice for his own sins. This way of representing the death of Christ was adapted to conciliate the prejudices of the Hebrew Christians. Also, as the posterity of Aaron were successively removed by death (ver. 23), successive priests were consecrated by successive sacrifices. But Christ lives for ever, a consecrated priest, and has no successor. Further, priests under the law were subject to infirmity, and might desecrate themselves by ceremonial pollution and inadvertent acts: ver. 28. It was necessary, therefore, that they should be reconsecrated by daily and by annual sacrifices; but Christ being in-

Ch. VII. Ver. 27. own involuntary transgressions, by which he has ceremonially desecrated his character and disqualified himself for his office: and after this service he offers another sacrifice for the involuntary transgressions of the people, by which they have excluded themselves from the privileges of the Mosaic covenant:

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capable of ceremonial desecration, his one sacrifice is sufficient. He is now perfect for ever.

And, let it be remarked, IN THE VERY SAME SENSE in which Christ offered a sacrifice for his own sins, in that very sense did he offer sacrifice for the sins of the people. There is no distinction. But the sins of Christ were not moral, but ceremonial: the contrary supposition is absurd. Such, then, and no other, are those sins of the people for which Christ offered a sacrifice; like his own, they are not moral, but ceremonial. No sacrifices are appointed for moral offences, either under the old dispensation or the new; no atonement, no appeasing of divine wrath, no satisfaction to offended justice. But as Christ by his one sacrifice consecrated himself for ever, transferred himself from a ceremonially unholy to a ceremonially holy state; so, exactly in the same way, those who believe the gospel are by the sacrifice of Christ made ceremonially pure. From sinners they become saints; they are transferred from the community of unbelievers and enemies to that of believers who are reconciled to God; and from this holy community nothing can exclude them but wilful apostasy, voluntary transgression: and for these no sacrifice is provided.

What the writer means is this: that as Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priestly office by sprinkling of the real blood of the animal victim, Lev. viii. 30: so converts to the gospel are consecrated to God by the figurative application of the blood of Christ; and he gives this view of the purpose of the death of Christ, merely to reconcile the minds of the Hebrews to a fact, to them the most mortifying that could possibly be conceived, the crucifixion of the Messiah.

"We have been directed," says Dr. Priestley, "to a variety of circumstances as implying the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus to that of Aaron: but it is only by way of figure that he can be said to be a priest at all; being in reality no more a priest than he was a door or a vine, or any thing else to which he is occasionally compared."

and thus, according to the divine appointment, they become reinstated in their forfeited charter. But the high-priest of the new dispensation is under no such degrading obligation. Being indeed of the tribe of Judah he was ceremonially unholy, and therefore needed a rite of consecration to his priestly office. This rite was his own death: the voluntary sacrifice of himself has consecrated him for ever to the service of God, and, as he cannot again contract ceremonial impurity, he can never need another sacrifice of consecration. The same observation may be applied to all believers. Being consecrated to God by faith in Jesus, while they continue to believe they need no stated renewals of their covenant obligation. Till they exclude themselves by apostasy, or voluntary transgression, they remain the holy servants of God, entitled to all the privileges of the Christian community. Ch. VII. Ver. 27.

This, I doubt not, is the true sense in which the author uses the harsh expression that Jesus offered up a sacrifice for his own sins. Jesus was the holiest of the human race; and this the writer expressly declares. The sins therefore for which he offered a sacrifice were those ceremonial disqualifications which were inconsistent with the office of high-priest. These he represents as removed by his death, in order to accommodate himself to the notions of the Jews, who thought that no person or thing could be consecrated without shedding of blood.

Ch. VII. Ver. 27. Observe further, that in the very same sense in which Jesus is said to have offered sacrifice for his own sins, in that identical sense he offered sacrifice for the sins of the people: and that is not in a moral but in a ceremonial sense. He was descended from Judah and not from Levi, and therefore was ceremonially unclean, in the eye of the law a sinner; and, figuratively speaking, he was consecrated by his own blood. And the Mosaic law being now abrogated, Jews and Gentiles are all equally in an unholy uncovenanted state, that is, in a legal sense, sinners. The blood of Jesus ratified the new covenant, and all who believe become thereby ceremonially holy: they are introduced into a privileged state, which if they improve, they shall ultimately partake of all its promises in their fullest extent. Not a word is said of the sacrifice of Christ satisfying the justice of God, and making compensation for moral offences.

28. *For the law constituteth high-priests men liable to infirmity; but the declaration by oath, which* was *after the law,* constituteth *a son, made perfect, for ever.*

It is highly reasonable that the Jewish high-priests should at stated times renew their sacrifices; because, being liable to inadvertencies, and even to external accidents, by which they were occasionally disqualified, it became necessary to the validity of their ministrations that their inauguration should be as it were from time to time renewed. But that great high-priest, who was long after the promulga-

tion of the law designated to his office by the solemnity of an oath, is liable to no such imperfection. He cannot, by any ceremonial defect, disqualify himself for his high station; but being, by his resurrection from the dead, declared to be the son of God, he remains for ever a consecrated priest, complete in every qualification of the sacerdotal character. Ch. VII. Ver. 28.

SECTION VI.

THE WRITER now proceeds to reconcile the minds of the believing Hebrews to the very offensive doctrine of a suffering Messiah, by representing the death of Jesus as the sacrifice of an illustrious victim to ratify the conditions of the new and better covenant. Ch. viii. 1.—x. 18. Ch. VIII.

I.

The writer represents the priestly office of Christ as executed in the heavenly sanctuary, of which the grand Mosaic tabernacle was but a faint imperfect copy, ver. 1—6.

When God commanded Moses to construct a magnificent tabernacle for the purposes of religious worship, he not only gave him the most explicit directions concerning even the minutest particulars, but he exhibited to his view upon the Mount an exact model of the building which was about to be

Ch. VIII. reared, requiring a strict conformity to this model in every particular in his future operations. See Exod. xxv. The writer of this epistle, in order to accommodate himself to the prejudices and feelings of the believing Hebrews, represents this visionary tabernacle as having a real existence in heaven, and describes Jesus as the officiating priest in this celestial sanctuary, and performing offices here similar to those performed by the priests of the Mosaic tabernacle, but in a style as much superior as heaven to earth, and as a perfect model to a faint imperfect copy.

This is the idea and the scenery which we must carry in our minds if we are desirous to understand the sense and design of the author in the following chapters: and it must be particularly noted, that as the tabernacle which Moses saw in the Mount was a visionary and not a real structure, so every thing which the writer here advances concerning Christ's officiating in this visionary sanctuary, is also visionary and scenical, and not real. The majority of readers, and even of commentators, not adverting to this circumstance, having understood that in a literal which was intended in a symbolical sense, have run into the most unaccountable and unintelligible, not to say absurd, doctrines concerning the priesthood of Christ, and the satisfaction made by his atonement to the divine justice for the sins of men; nothing of which is intended or alluded to by the author, whose whole meaning terminates in this simple proposition, that the new covenant was

ratified by the blood of Jesus. Let him now speak for himself. Ch. VIII.

1. To prepare the way for what he was about to advance concerning the purposes of the death of Christ, he briefly recapitulates the circumstances of his sacerdotal office and exaltation, ver. 1, 2.

Now the chief article[1] *of what has been said is this, We have such a high-priest*[2], *who is now sitting at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*[3], *a minister of the most holy place*[4], *even of the true tabernacle*[5] *which the Lord hath fixed, and not man*[6]. Ver. 1. 2.

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[1] *The chief article.*] The Alexandrine manuscript reads εν for επι. *q. d.* This is the chief among all the things which have been said. In this sense the text is understood by the Syriac and Vulgate, and by Chrysostom and Œcumenius. See Peirce, Whitby, and Grotius.

[2] *Such a high-priest.*] τοιουτον· that is, such an one as became us, such as I have described. See ch. vii. 26.

[3] *The right hand of the throne.*] See Ps. cx. 1. *i. e.* a priest who corresponds with the prophecy, after the order of Melchisedec, both priest and king. The phrase, "at the right hand of the throne," expresses dignity and authority: how far it is personal with regard to Christ, is no where revealed. But he rules his church by his gospel; that is, his law.

[4] *Most holy place.*] "αγιον, the most holy place. See ch. ix. 8, 12, 24, x. 19." Newcome.

[5] *Even of the true tabernacle.*] και, *even*; an expression exegetical of the former. The true tabernacle is not heaven, as Newcome and others explain it, but that tabernacle which Moses saw in the Mount; which he supposes to have a real existence in heaven, and to be the sanctuary in which Jesus in his exalted state officiates.

[6] *Which the Lord hath fixed.*] The tabernacle which Moses saw was made by God himself, of which that constructed by Moses was a poor imperfect copy.

Ch. VIII. Ver. 2. I have written much to illustrate the distinction between the priesthood of Melchisedec and that of Aaron, and to show the great superiority of Jesus, who is a priest of the former description, to the Levitical priests, who are of the order of Aaron. The main point that I mean to establish is this, which I would have you keep in mind, that you may understand what I have further to advance, namely, that we who are parties in the new dispensation have a high-priest in every respect suited to the dispensation under which we live; perfect in his character, completely qualified for his office, who in his regal capacity is advanced to the highest station of dignity and authority in the church; and in his sacerdotal office has entered into that celestial sanctuary which God himself has constructed; into that original and splendid tabernacle, which no human skill or power could have reared, and which was exhibited to Moses as a model for that tabernacle which he was commanded to build.

2. Under the character of a priest it was the office of Jesus to present a sacrifice, ver. 3.

3. *Moreover, every high-priest is constituted to offer both gifts and sacrifices: therefore it is necessary that this* high-priest *also should offer something.*

You well know that the business of the high-priest is to offer gifts and sacrifices: such was the duty of Melchisedec, and such the office of Aaron and his successors: since therefore Jesus is foretold under the character of a high-priest, you are naturally led

to expect that he likewise must have somewhat to offer; and so he has: what this offering is I shall soon explain at large. Ch. VIII. Ver. 3.

3. By the law of Moses he was excluded from officiating in the earthly temple, ver. 4—5.

But if he were on earth, he would not be a priest[1]; *since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law; who perform divine service*[2] *with the copy and shadow*[3] *of heavenly things; as* 4. 5.

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[1] *He would not be a priest.*] It is debated among divines, whether Jesus officiated as a priest on earth. The controversy is frivolous; because it is only in a loose and figurative sense that he is said to be a priest at all. As he voluntarily submitted to death for the benefit of mankind, he may be said as a priest to have offered himself as a sacrifice. But it suited the design of the author of this epistle to represent Jesus as not interfering with the Levitical priesthood, and therefore as not invested with the sacerdotal office till he was introduced into the celestial tabernacle. Dr. Sykes argues from this text, "1. That Jesus never did act as a priest on earth. 2. That he did not offer himself as a sacrifice upon the cross: for, if he had, he must have acted as a priest. 3. That the cross is not, nor can it be considered in any sense as, an altar. 4. That the oblation of himself upon earth, or the shedding his blood, was no part of his sacerdotal office: for this was all done and over before his priesthood began." "If there is any strength," says Peirce, "in our author's reasoning, as no doubt there is a great deal, I can't see how it can consist with the assertion that Christ was a priest in his death. For if he could not be a priest on earth, because there were priests who offered gifts according to the law, the same reason would hold good while he actually was upon earth."

[2] *Perform divine service.*] λατρευσι, "pay religious service." Wakefield.—" λατ. *proprie*, servio, colo religiosè, *haud raro*, *per* sacra facere, munere sacerdotali fungi, *reddendum*." Schleusner.

[3] *With the copy and shadow.*] That is, they do service in that tabernacle and with those holy instruments; which are a faint imperfect copy of what was exhibited to Moses in the Mount.

See

Ch. VIII. Ver. 5. *Moses was instructed by God*[1] *when he was about to make the tabernacle; for, See, saith He,* that *thou make all according to the model shown thee on the Mount.* Exod. xxv. 40.

The Messiah having been foretold as a great high-priest, you were naturally led to expect a splendid ritual, and are ready to take offence at the simplicity of Christian institutions. But if you reflect, you must see, that by the law of Moses he was necessarily excluded from officiating in the earthly sanctuary: being of the tribe of Judah, and a priest of a different order, he would not be suffered to invade the office of the Levitical priests. These, and these only, were appointed to officiate in the earthly tabernacle; which, though framed agreeably to the express direction of God, and very splendid in its structure and mode of worship, was, after all, nothing more than a faint imperfect copy of that transcendently glorious model which was exhibited by God to Moses in the Mount, and in which our great high-priest now officiates.

4. The services in which Jesus is employed are far more honourable than those of the Levitical priesthood, ver. 6.

See Peirce. "In the idea of this writer, this superior sanctuary is that in which Jesus now officiates; but it is evident, that what was shown in the Mount was nothing more than a pattern of what was to be made." Dr. Priestley.

[1] *Instructed by God.*] κεχρηματισται. Newcome. "according to that divine direction." Wakefield. "χρηματιζω *proprie aliquam rem tracto—oraculum divinum edo.*" Schleusner.

But now he hath obtained a more excellent ministry[2], *inasmuch as he is also the mediator*[3] *of a better covenant, the law of which hath been established*[4] *on better promises*[5]. Ch. VIII. Ver. 6.

The services of our high-priest are not attended with any circumstances of external grandeur; for they are invisible, being performed in the heavenly sanctuary: but they are nevertheless far more dignified and solemn than those of the temple on earth, and necessarily must be so, because the covenant which he has introduced and sanctioned is far superior, both in its obligations and its promises, to that which was promulgated by Moses and ratified by the sacrifices appointed by the law.

II.

Having spoken incidentally of a better covenant, the author digresses[6] to show that such a covenant had been the plain object of a direct prophecy. Ch. viii. 7, *to the end.*

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[2] *A more excellent ministry.*] "Because the service which he conducts is that of the heavenly tabernacle." Peirce.

[3] *The mediator:*] that is, the medium of communication between God and man; as Moses was the mediator between God and the Israelite nation. Gal. iii. 19. There is no greater mystery in the mediation of Jesus than in that of Moses.

[4] *The law of which hath been established.*] So Mr. Wakefield translates the word νενομοθετηται.

[5] *On better promises.*] "Eternal life, not temporal blessings." Newcome.

[6] *The author digresses.*] Mr. Peirce observes, that this paragraph comes in by way of parenthesis; and that the beginning of the ninth chapter connects properly with the sixth verse of the preceding.

Ch. VIII. 1. It is remarked that the imperfection of the first prepared the way for the introduction of the second covenant, ver. 7.

Ver. 7. *For if that first* covenant *had been unexceptionable, there had been no room*[1] *for a second.*

Having mentioned our great high-priest as the person appointed by God to introduce and ratify a new and better covenant than that of Moses, I must allow that this appointment does necessarily imply that the Mosaic dispensation, though of divine institution, and excellently adapted to answer the end for which it was intended, was not calculated to accomplish in its full extent the promise of God to our great ancestor Abraham: for if it had been able perfectly to bring to pass all the purposes of the divine wisdom and mercy, it would not have been set aside as deficient, to make room for a more perfect comprehensive dispensation.

2. That such a dispensation was intended to supersede the Mosaic ritual, is argued from the clear and explicit prophecy of Jeremiah[2], ver. 8—12.

8. *For finding fault*[3] with the former covenant, the scripture *saith to them, Behold the days are coming,*

[1] *There had been no room.*] See Worsley. "Gr. 'no place would have been sought.'" Newcome.

[2] *Prophecy of Jeremiah.*] This paragraph is taken from Jer. xxxi. 31—34. The whole chapter is a plain prediction of the conversion and restoration of the Israelite nation, which has not yet received its accomplishment. The citation is made from the LXX.

[3] *Finding fault.*] μεμφομενος. "*minoris faciens pactum prius, dicit illis,*" &c. Grotius.

saith the Lord, when I will execute with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant: not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, at the time when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, when they continued not in my covenant, and I gave up my care of them[4], *saith the Lord. For this* is *the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws*[5] *into their minds, and I will*

Ch. VIII.

Ver. 9.

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[4] *I gave up my care of them.*] ημελησα. So Wakefield. This is the reading of the Alexandrine copy of the LXX. adopted by this writer, and approved by the majority of critics. It is cited from Jer. xxxi. 32, where the original reads בעלתי, which in the public version is rendered, *although I was a husband to them.* To account for the sense which the LXX. have given, Dr. Pococke says, that the word בעל in the Arabic signifies, not only to *govern*, but to *reject*, to *despise*, to *nauseate*. See Whitby. Others have conjectured that the true reading of the Hebrew text is נעלתי, I have *loathed:* see Jer. xiv. 19. And others, that the true reading is בחלתי, I *abhorred:* see Zech. xi. 8. This is the reading preferred by Peirce and Newcome.—See Peirce's learned note.

But Dr. Blayney, in his judicious and learned *Translation of Jeremiah*, printed at the Clarendon press, 1784, contends for the purity of the Hebrew text, and vindicates the translation of it in the public version, which he adopts. He appeals to ch. iii. 14, where the same word occurs in the same sense; and observes, that εμελησα is the word which stands in the generality of copies of the LXX., which materially agrees with the Hebrew: "although I took care of, or protected them." In the Alexandrine copy, as well as the Epistle to the Hebrews, the word ημελησε is found; which bears a quite contrary sense. But Dr. B. expresses a doubt whether εμελησε might not have been the original word in the epistle, but altered by the inadvertence of some early transcriber. For this conjecture, however, there appears to be no authority, nor indeed any necessity.

[5] *I will put my laws.*] Dr. Whitby observes that these two

Ch. VIII. *inscribe them on their hearts, and I will be to them*
Ver. 11. *a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach*[1] *every one his* fellow-*citizen*[2], *and every one his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for all shall know me from the least of them to the*
12. *greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteous deeds, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

This declaration of the prophet Jeremiah, in

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metaphors, in the scriptures and in Jewish writers, signify, 1.) A clear and perspicuous revelation of the mind and will of God. 2.) An efficacious impression of them upon the memory and the soul. Deut. xxx. 11, 14, Rom. x. 8, 9, Rom. ii. 15, Deut. vi. 6, Deut. xi. 18, Prov. iii. 1, 3, vii. 1.

[1] *They shall not teach*, &c.] "It cannot be imagined," says Mr. Peirce, "that the common methods of instruction, and particularly of educating youth, will then be laid aside, and that all will be done by an immediate inspiration. The expressions here used must be understood not absolutely but comparatively; and hereby is intended the vast increase there shall be among them of the knowledge of God."

Dr. Priestley has a very peculiar idea of the state of things which will take place in the Hebrew nation when these prophecies are fulfilled. "That in this new and future state of things the forms of the ancient law will be resumed and continue to the end of time," says that enlightened interpreter of scripture, "is evident from the very particular description of the temple, and the service of it, in the book of Ezekiel. And that there will be no change of the priesthood, is evident from its being there declared that it will be in the family of Zadoc, while the temporal sovereignty will be in the family of David; so that both the king and the priest will be according to the ancient constitution, and the business of sacrificing will be conducted by them as it had been before."

[2] Fellow-*citizen*.] πολιτην. This is the reading of the Alexandrine, Clermont, and Corbey manuscripts, and of many others, and of the Syriac and other versions. It is taken into the text by Griesbach and Newcome. The received text reads πλησιον, *neighbour*.

which, in the name of God, he solemnly announces the divine purpose of introducing a new and a better covenant, with the express design of superseding that of Moses, demonstrates the truth of the doctrine which I have advanced, that the Mosaic covenant was not intended, nor calculated, to fulfill all the gracious purposes of God to his chosen people: and the introduction of this new covenant may in this view be considered as expressing dissatisfaction with the old covenant because of its imperfection, though well adapted to the circumstances in which it was given. You ought not, therefore, to be offended when you are told that the Mosaic œconomy is to be superseded, since your own prophets so expressly teach the same doctrine. Ch. VIII. Ver. 12.

This prophecy is cited by the writer, from the Greek translation of Jer. xxxi. 31—34, which in the main agrees with the Hebrew original. Upon this prediction we may observe,

1. That it does not represent the Mosaic covenant as faulty and unworthy of God, but merely as incomplete, and incompetent to answer all his beneficent purposes to the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

2. This prophecy extends to the whole Hebrew nation, consisting of all the twelve tribes, and is limited to them: it is accompanied in the original text of Jeremiah with a promise of restoration to their own country: it certainly was not fulfilled in their restoration after the Babylonian captivity,

Ch. VIII. Ver. 12. nor has it yet received its proper accomplishment. It therefore relates to some important blessings which are yet in reserve in the councils of divine wisdom for that extraordinary people.

3. The writer of the epistle represents the new covenant, which is the subject of this prophecy, as that which God has made with believers in general, whether Jews or heathen, by Jesus Christ, and which is ratified by his death. And there seems no reason to doubt that this is the true sense of the prophecy.

4. In this view, as applied to the Hebrew nation, the prophecy announces that the descendants of Abraham shall at length embrace the Christian faith, and shall then be restored to their original country: an event, the expectation of which is countenanced by many other passages in the Jewish and Christian scriptures, and which, when it takes place, will establish beyond all doubt the divine authority of the Christian religion.

5. God is said in this, as in some other passages of scripture, to do that which is the certain and foreknown result of the dispensations of his providence. The Hebrew nation will, in the course of events, at the appointed time be induced to believe and obey the gospel. This is foretold by the expressions, "I will put my laws into their minds and inscribe them upon their hearts."

6. Under the old dispensation rites and ceremonies were so numerous, that public instructors were indispensably necessary to teach the people their

legal duties. It is here foretold, that the new dispensation would be so plain and simple that all should understand it almost without the necessity of instruction: "They shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know me [1], from the least of them to the greatest." A plain intimation, not that all instruction will be superfluous, for then human nature must cease to be what it is, but that all ritual observations, which could only be performed by a regular priesthood, should cease; and perhaps, that, in the flourishing state of the Messiah's kingdom, there would be no occasion for a distinct order of men to officiate as public instructors. Ch. VIII. Ver. 12.

7. The great promise of the new covenant is, that Jehovah will be their God, and that all iniquity shall be forgiven, that is, that he will take believers into covenant at present, and reward the virtuous with happiness hereafter. He is not ashamed to be called their God, because he hath prepared for them a city. So our Lord himself argues the doctrine of a future life: he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him, and will be raised by him.

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[1] *All shall know me.*] Dr. Macknight observes, that "this promise is amply accomplished under the new covenant, by the multiplication of the copies of the scriptures, the translation of them into many different languages, the preaching of the word, the regular performance of the public worship of God, and by the pains which the ministers and teachers of religion take in instructing the people."

Ch. VIII. 3. He draws the inference that the old covenant will soon vanish, ver. 13.

Ver. 13. *When he saith, A new* covenant, *he representeth the first as old; but what is going to decay from age* must *shortly disappear*[1].

The Mosaic ritual is wearing out apace and falling rapidly into decay: in a very short time, though you little think of it, it will be suddenly and totally dissolved.

The writer is here supposed to allude to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans, under Titus Vespasian: which catastrophe took place about ten years after this epistle is conjectured to have been written.

III.

Ch. IX. The writer argues, that as persons and things in the earthly tabernacle were purified and consecrated by the blood of animal victims, so it was expedient that under the new and better covenant, and in the heavenly tabernacle, they should be purified and consecrated with the blood of a better victim, that is,

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[1] *Must shortly disappear.*] Wakefield. ἐγγυς· this word implies, that the temple service was not abolished at the time when this epistle was written. Whitby says, "that though the Judaical sacrifices after the death of Christ ceased to be obliging, yet these words seem to intimate that the church, state, and polity of the Jews was not come to its full period till the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem." "According to some, the destruction of the city and temple by the Romans happened ten years after the writing of this epistle." Newcome.

of the high-priest, the Messiah himself. Ch. ix. 1 —14. CH. IX.

1. He gives a brief detail of the grand Mosaic tabernacle and its furniture, ver. 1—5.

Now indeed the first covenant[2] *had ordinances of worship and a worldly sanctuary*[3]. VER. 1.

The Mosaic covenant, as you well know, had its rites of religious worship, and its holy places; but these, though of divine appointment, and very splendid, were in real value greatly inferior to those in which Jesus officiates, and into which his followers are introduced. The Mosaic sanctuary and its costly furniture were made of earthly materials, and by human artificers, an imperfect imitation of a perfect model.

For there was a tabernacle made. The first, in which was the candlestick and the table[4], *and the shew-bread. This was called holy.* 2.

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[2] *The first* covenant.] Many copies read σκηνη, *tabernacle*; and Dr. Whitby, Mr. Peirce, and Dr. Doddridge think that this word best suits the connexion. But ἡ πρωτη seems evidently to refer to την πρωτην in the preceding sentence, where it is unquestionably used for *the first covenant*; and the meaning of the writer is, that as the first dispensation had its tabernacle and furniture, so also has the second. See Macknight, Newcome, &c.

[3] *Worldly sanctuary.*] "public sanctuary." Wakefield. κοσμικον, *worldly*, in opposition to the true and heavenly tabernacle exhibited to Moses on the Mount, ch. viii. 2, 5. See Peirce and Newcome. Some commentators suppose that it is called *worldly*, as being a symbolical representation of the universe according to the notions of the Jews. But the other sense is preferable. See Grotius and Macknight.

[4] *The table*, &c.] Exod. xxv. 23—30, xl. 22—26.

Ch. IX. Ver. 2. You remember that, agreeably to the directions of God to Moses, Exod. xxvi., a splendid tabernacle was erected in the wilderness, which was divided into two apartments. The first, and the largest, was called the holy place, which contained, amongst other things, the golden candlestick with its seven branches, and the table upon which were placed twelve loaves, which were renewed every sabbath, as a tribute of gratitude to divine providence.

3. *And behind the second veil* [1] *was the tabernacle,*
4. *which was called the holy of holies* [2]*, containing the golden censer* [3]*, and the ark of the covenant* [4]*, overlaid every where with gold: in which was the golden pot that held the manna* [5]*, and the rod of*

[1] *The second veil.*] The first veil opened into the holy place, Exod. xxvi. 36, 37; the second veil separated the holy from the most holy place, Exod. xxvi. 31, 32, xxxvi. 35.

[2] *Holy of holies:*] the form of the Hebrew superlative, *q. d. the most holy place,* into which none entered but the high-priest on the day of atonement; here the shechinah, or cloud of glory, rested upon the mercy-seat between the cherubim.

[3] *Golden censer.*] Moses makes no mention of a golden censer; but as the priest was required, Lev. xvi. 12, 13, to carry a censer with incense with him into the most holy place, there probably was, as the Jews say, a golden censer appropriated to this use; which might be laid up in the most holy place, very near the veil, so that the priest might reach it without going into the holy of holies. The writer makes no mention of the golden altar, for the construction of which, and its uses, very particular directions were given to Moses, Exod. xxx. 1—10. I should have suspected that *censer* (θυμιατηριον) had been a slip of the author's pen for *altar* (θυσιαστηριον), or the error of some early transcriber; only that this writer, himself a Hebrew, writing to Hebrews, could not possibly have mistaken the situation of the golden altar, which was before the veil, not within it.

[4] *The ark of the covenant.*] Exod. xxv. 10—16, xxxvii. 1—5.

[5] *The golden pot.*] Exod. xvi. 32—34. The LXX. expressly

Aaron that blossomed[6], *and the tables of the covenant*[7], *and over it the cherubim of glory*[8], *shadowing the mercy-seat*[9], *concerning which it is not my present purpose to speak particularly.* Ch. IX. Ver. 5.

In the Mosaic tabernacle you know were two veils: one hung down over the entrance of the tabernacle and screened the priests, while performing the rites of religious worship, from the gaze of the profane. The second veil was within the tabernacle, and separated the holy from the most holy place. Behind this veil, and within this sacred repository, was placed the golden censer, with which the high-priest officiated when he entered into the most holy place on the day of atonement. Also, that precious

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call it a golden pot; the Hebrew makes no mention of the metal.

[6] *The rod of Aaron.*] Numb. xvii. 1—10. No mention is made either of the rod of Aaron or the pot of manna being deposited in the ark, so that some suppose that εν ᾗ only signifies *being near the ark;* it seems to be generally believed that they were at first deposited in the ark, but by some accident or other were lost before the time of Solomon, when it is expressly said, that nothing remained in the ark but the two tables of stone, 1 Kings viii. 9, 2 Chron. v. 10.

[7] *The tables of the covenant.*] It was expressly ordered that the tablets of stone containing the ten commandments should be deposited in the ark, Exod. xxv. 16, xl. 20.

[8] *The cherubim.*] Exod. xxv. 17—22, xxxvii. 6—9. Moses gives no description of the cherubim; they were probably similar to the figures in Ezekiel's vision, Ezek. i. 4—14, and were hieroglyphical representations of universal worship.

[9] *The mercy-seat.*] ἱλαστηριον. This is described Exod. xxv. 21, 22. Here the divine mercy as it were, took its stand, and from the cloud of glory oracles were delivered. In allusion to this Jesus is called a mercy-seat, Rom. iii. 25; which our translators improperly render *a propitiation,* instead of *a propitiatory.*

Ch. IX. Ver. 5. chest which, being made of wood, was wholly overlaid with gold; and which, from the use to which it was applied, was justly denominated the ark of the covenant; which originally contained that golden pot which Moses was required to fill with manna, that the children of Israel, through all their generations, might possess an ocular and sensible proof of the miraculous manner in which their ancestors had been supported in the wilderness. It also contained the rod of Aaron, which miraculously budded, blossomed, and bore fruit, as an attestation of the will of God to select that family in preference to all others, to exercise the priestly office. The two tables of stone, on which the ten commandments, the observance of which was the essential condition of the promised blessing, were engraved by the finger of God himself, were also deposited in the ark, and remained there till the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar; though the vessel of manna and the rod of Aaron were lost before the building of Solomon's temple. The golden lid of this holy chest was, as you must remember, called the mercy-seat; for upon this the shechinah, or cloud of glory, rested, which was the symbol of the divine presence; and from which, proceeded those oracles which were intended for the instruction, consolation, and encouragement, of the people of God. Over this chest were placed the cherubim, which were symbolical figures in a worshiping posture, whose spreading wings overshadowed the mercy-seat, and which represented the whole creation as offering its homage

to the supreme Being. I have much to say concerning the symbolical use of all these articles, and might easily show, as in the case of Melchisedec, that each of them was typical of something more truly great and splendid under the Christian dispensation: but for the present I forbear, intending to limit myself to the subject of priests and sacrifices, and to show the analogy between the consecration of things and persons under the law by the blood of animal victims, and under the gospel by the blood of Jesus. Ch. IX. Ver. 5.

Thus we see that it was the main design of this writer to conciliate the minds of the believing Hebrews, by drawing an analogy between the old dispensation and the new; and by representing every thing great and splendid in the Mosaic ritual, as typical of something still more great and more splendid in the spiritual service of the heavenly tabernacle, in which Jesus is supposed to officiate. He conducts his allegory with much ingenuity; and he plainly insinuates that it was in his power to have carried the allusion much further; as indeed he easily might; for to such kind of writing there is no limit, but a writer's own fancy or discretion. And all this might answer a very good purpose to the simple and prejudiced Hebrews: but when Christians interpret literally what the author meant figuratively; and when they apply such observations to all Christians, in all ages, which were intended and adapted only to a particular descrip-

Ch. IX. Ver. 5. tion of Christians in the primitive age, they totally mistake and pervert the writer's meaning; and upon this mistake they erect a fabric of absurd and mischievous opinions, which they exhibit to the world in lieu of the plain, simple and majestic structure of Christian truth; and thus, by powerfully impressing the imagination, they oft divert the attention of the multitude from the pure and spiritual worship of the living and the true God.

2. The writer proceeds to describe the different offices which were performed in the holy and in the most holy place, ver. 6, 7.

6. *These things therefore being thus prepared, the priests enter*[1] *continually into the first tabernacle,*
7. *performing the services* of God; *but into the second the high-priest alone* entereth *once every year, not without blood, which he offereth for the sins of ignorance, of himself, and of the people*[2].

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[1] *The priests enter.*] Archbishop Newcome justly observes, that "the present tense is here used, and *offereth* in the next verse, because the temple was then standing."

[2] *The sins of ignorance.*] The ritual for the day of atonement is prescribed Lev. xvi. The high-priest is required to sprinkle the blood of a young bullock for himself, and of a kid for the people. This is called the *atonement*, not because the anger of God was supposed to be appeased by the substitution of the blood of the victim for that of the offender, for in the first place it was only for sins of ignorance that this sacrifice was appointed; and secondly, the high-priest is said to make atonement for the altar and for the sanctuary, and to reconcile the holy place and the tabernacle, as well as to atone for the priests and to reconcile the people, ver. 17, 18, 20, 33. Hence it follows, that the business of the day was only to reconsecrate

Ch. IX. Ver. 7.

The tabernacle of Moses having been thus constructed and divided into two parts, a ritual was established for each, which in substance is observed in your temple at Jerusalem even to the present day. It is the custom for the inferior priests to go every day into the holy place to light the lamps, to offer the morning and the evening sacrifice, and to perform the stated rites of divine worship: but into the holy of holies, within the veil, no one is ever permitted to enter but the high-priest, and even he, only one day in the year, the day of general atonement, when he is required to sprinkle the blood of a bullock for himself, and of a goat for the people, before the mercy-seat; as a solemn form of renewing the covenant with God, if it had been inadvertently violated, either by the priest or the people.

In order to understand the meaning of the writer in this passage, it is necessary to remember that there were various incidents by which a person became ceremonially polluted, and thereby excluded for a time from the benefit of the Mosaic covenant, till he had purified and reinstated himself by certain prescribed ablutions and sacrifices. When the cause of pollution was known, the rite of readmission was determined, as in the case of touching a dead body: but incidental pollutions were no doubt frequently

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things or persons which had been accidentally polluted; and in general, to renew the covenant which might have been, and probably had been, in the case of every individual inadvertently violated.

Ch. IX. Ver. 7. contracted unawares, and by these sins of ignorance a person was inadvertently excluded from the covenant. For such cases, and for these *alone*, were the sacrifices of the day of atonement provided. And by the ceremony of the sprinkling of the blood of the victims on that day, the priests and the people, who, by inadvertent acts, or unknown circumstances, might have become ceremonially polluted and profane, now became ceremonially pure and holy; the outlawry, if I may so express it, was reversed; and the whole people, on this solemn occasion, annually renewed their covenant with Jehovah. From this brief state of the case, every one may see how little foundation there is for the strange opinion that the blood of the victim was offered to appease the wrath of God, or the life of the sacrifice as a substitute for that of the offender.

3. The mystical signification of this ritual was, that the Mosaic œconomy left its votaries in a very imperfect state, ver. 8—10.

8. *Whereby the holy spirit signified*[1], that *the way into the* holy *of holies is not yet made manifest while*
9. *the first tabernacle is standing*[2], *which* is *a figure*

[1] *The holy spirit signified.*] This writer does not himself pretend to inspiration, and he produces no kind of evidence to prove that any such mystical meaning was intended by the Deity in the tabernacle service as he has annexed to it. It can therefore only be considered as the private opinion of this unknown writer; who perhaps, after all, meant nothing more than that the tabernacle service, spiritually understood, might be considered as teaching this lesson.

[2] *While the first tabernacle is standing.*] See Newcome. "The

of the present time[3], *in which* tabernacle *are offered* Ch. IX. Ver. 9.
both gifts and sacrifices, which cannot, as to his
conscience[4], *make perfect him that worshipeth* God
only with meat and drink offerings[5] *and divers* 10.
washings, which are *carnal ordinances*[6] *appointed*[7]
until the time of reformation[8].

Now, my brethren, all this ceremonial which I

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first tabernacle here signifies the court of the priests, or the holy place. See ver. 2, 6. And this sense best suits the author's argument. For as that court led to the holy of holies, and was accessible to none but the priests, who were themselves prohibited from entering the most holy place, it is plain that as long as this remained in its ancient state and use, the way into the holiest was not then manifest." Peirce.

[3] *A figure of the present time.*] εις τον καιρον. In Valesius's readings it is τῳ καιρῳ παραβολη. "a type or imperfect delineation of the advantages of the present time, now Christ is come." Peirce. But surely, the state of the first tabernacle, in which the way to the holiest was not yet manifest, was rather a sketch of the times under the law, which is here called the *present time*, as the temple was then standing, and its service conducted in the usual manner. Compare ver. 11.

[4] *As to his conscience.*] No sacrifices were appointed for voluntary transgressions, Psalm l. 8—14, li. 16, 17. The sacrifices on the day of atonement were expressly appointed for sins of ignorance, ver. 7.

[5] *With meat and drink* offerings.] Gr. *with meats and drinks.* επι is used for εν. This sense is suggested by Peirce; who justly observes, that "nothing can be more to the author's purpose."

[6] *Carnal ordinances.*] Peirce adopts the Alexandrine reading, δικαιωματα, and supplies the words, ἀτινα ην· "*which were* carnal ordinances laid on the Jews."

[7] *Ordinances appointed.*] An expression very similar to many in Paul's epistles. "The author brings in this clause to disparage the ordinances upon which the Hebrews set so high a value." Peirce.

[8] *Time of reformation*:] that is, the times of the Messiah, in opposition to the present time, ver. 9. "The reformation is the change that Christ made of the way and manner of serving God." Peirce.

Ch. IX. Ver. 10. have described has a mystical meaning, which I will explain to you in its proper order, and thereby convince you of the propriety and expedience of the sufferings of the Messiah. In the first place, the sanctuary, which is before the veil where the ordinary priests officiated, is a symbol of the present, I mean the Mosaic dispensation: and as the veil was never removed while the priests were officiating in the holy place, this shows that the new and better dispensation, that of the Messiah, will never take place till the old Mosaic covenant is abrogated. And this is the more evident, as the sacrifices and ablutions, the meat and drink offerings, which are prescribed by the law for the purification of ceremonial pollutions and sins of ignorance do not extend to voluntary offences, and are nothing more than external rites to answer a temporary purpose; and which may with propriety be laid aside when the season of reformation comes, and a new and spiritual dispensation is introduced.

4. The office of the high-priest, on the day of atonement, is a mystical representation of the office of Christ under the new dispensation, ver. 11, 12.

11. *But Christ, the high-priest of blessings which*
12. *were to be*[1], *being come*[2], *entered once for all, not*

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[1] *Blessings which were to be.*] των μελλοντων αγαθων. So Wakefield. *i. e.* blessings of the future age; the times of the Messiah; the Father of the age to come. Isaiah ix. 6. "It has respect, not so much to the heavenly felicity, as to the advantages we have by Christ in this present world." Peirce. The

indeed with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, into the most holy place, through that greater and more perfect tabernacle[3], *not made with hands, that is, not of the same workmanship, having obtained everlasting redemption*[4]. Ch. IX. Ver. 12.

As the high-priest entered once every year into the holy of holies, within the veil, to renew the covenant with God for all the chosen people by the blood of animal victims, so Jesus, the Messiah, the high-priest of the new dispensation, the dispenser of its promised blessings, foretold by the prophets, has also entered into the most holy place, to ratify with blood that better covenant into which his disciples are now initiated. But the office of our great high-priest far transcends that of the priests of the line of Aaron in a variety of important particulars. In the first place, the Jewish high-priest enters into

high-priest of future blessings seems to be opposed to the time present, ver. 9.

[2] *Being come.*] παραγενομενος is to be taken in construction with εισηλθεν. "being come to the most holy place, he hath entered in. See Acts xxiii. 16." Peirce.

[3] *Through that greater and more perfect tabernacle.*] He does not officiate in the earthly sanctuary, but in that celestial tabernacle which was shown to Moses in the Mount, and which was the model of that which he erected. And even here he does not officiate in the outer court, the court of the priests, but passing through, he enters the holy of holies. This celestial tabernacle is not, like that of Moses, made by human artists, nor of earthly kind, being of heavenly construction, and the model of the Mosaic.

[4] *Everlasting redemption.*] "not a yearly, but everlasting redemption." Newcome. From the yoke and the curses of the law. It is not to be forgotten that the sins which were propitiated on the day of atonement were only sins of ignorance of the past year.

Ch. IX. Ver. 12. the most holy place one day only in the year, but our high-priest is entered into his sanctuary to dwell for ever there. Again, The high-priest of the house of Aaron carried in with him the blood of a bullock and of a goat, by the sprinkling of which he purified the ceremonially unclean; but Jesus is gone in with his own blood to ratify the new covenant, by which all who believe are sanctified and consecrated. Further, the Jewish high-priest performed his ministrations in an earthly sanctuary, an imperfect copy of a celestial model, but the Christian high-priest performs his office in that very tabernacle, that celestial structure, of which that of Moses was but a faint resemblance. Lastly, The Jewish high-priest performed his office every year, and was obliged annually to repeat the sacrifices for annual transgressions of inadvertence. But the covenant ratified by the Christian high-priest is irrevocable; and they who believe in Jesus are redeemed for ever from the bondage of the law, and from the yoke of idolatry, so that while they continue to believe they cannot exclude themselves from the external blessings and privileges of the gospel by any involuntary transgressions of ceremonial institutions.

5. It is reasonable to expect that the blood of the Messiah would be efficacious to a far more valuable purpose than that of animal victims, ver. 13, 14.

13. *For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on the unclean*[1], *sanc-*

[1] *Sprinkled on the unclean.*] The precepts concerning this

tify to the purification of the flesh[2], *how much more will the blood of Christ*[3], *who by the holy spirit*[4] *offered himself spotless to God, purify your conscience from dead works*[5], *that ye may serve the living God?* Ch. IX. Ver. 14.

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rite are contained in Numb. xix. It is observable here that ceremonial pollution is produced, not only by actions innocent, necessary, and often unavoidable, such as touching and burying the dead, but by circumstances wholly involuntary and accidental, such as touching the bone of a dead man, or being in a tent when a person died, ver. 13, 14, and it extended even to inanimate things, to open vessels, &c. ver. 15. The expiations of the law only cleansed ceremonial pollutions.

[2] *Purification of the flesh.*] "Legal impurities debarred the Jews an attendance on the public service; from these they were freed by the sacrifices, washings, and sprinklings appointed by the Mosaic law, and so became qualified again for public worship. This our author speaks of under the notion of sanctification." Peirce. Consisting so much in washing and sprinkling, they are properly enough called *purifications of the flesh.* But if these rites were neglected, the offender was cut off from the congregation of Israel, *i. e.* excommunicated, forfeited his rights and privileges as a citizen. Numb. xix. 12, 13, 20. See Sykes.

[3] *The blood of Christ.*] of *the* Christ, the Messiah.

[4] *The holy spirit.*] This is the reading of the Clermont and some other MSS. and of the Coptic, Vulgate, and other versions. It is wanting in the Æthiopic. The received text, with the Alexandrine and other copies, and the Syriac and other versions, reads αιωνιε, *eternal,* or everlasting; an epithet not usually applied to the spirit, but upon which many build an argument (very precarious) for the personality and godhead of the third person in the trinity. Mr. Peirce understands it as strangely "of the Logos, or divine nature of our Lord."

[5] *Dead works.*] νεκρων εργων· this is a phrase peculiar to this author, and occurs only here and in ch. vi. 1, where *repentance from dead works* is represented as one of the first principles of the Christian doctrine, and immediately connected with *faith in God;* as in this case the purification of the conscience from *dead works* is the preliminary to the *service* or worship, λατρευειν, *of the living God.*

The phrase not being defined by the writer, it becomes ne-

Ch. IX. Ver. 14. Observe, my brethren, the course and the conclusiveness of the argument which I am pursuing.

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cessary to discover his meaning in the best manner we are able.

The most common interpretation of the passage is this: that as the blood of bulls and goats purified the worshiper from ceremonial offences, so the blood of Christ purifies the conscience from moral guilt, either by atoning for sin, according to some, or, as others explain it, by the merit of his obedience; or finally, by affording an assurance of pardon, or exhibiting a motive to virtue. None of these explanations appears to be satisfactory.

The main design of the author of this epistle is to reconcile the believing but wavering Hebrews to the doctrine of a suffering Messiah, and to the abolition of the ceremonial law, two things as offensive as can well be imagined; which, however, he manages with great delicacy and ingenuity.

He never mentions the crucifixion of Jesus, and its attendant circumstances of degradation; but with consummate address he represents the death of the Messiah as his own voluntary act, under the character of the high-priest of the celestial tabernacle, performing the most solemn and sacred duty of his office; entering into the celestial holy of holies on the great day of expiation, once for all offering his own blood, and remaining for ever in the celestial sanctuary to intercede, that is, to perform all priestly offices for his people.

The efficacy of the service of the Levitical high-priest in the earthly sanctuary is described as sanctifying to the purification of the flesh. The sacrifices were expressly offered for sins of ignorance, ch. viii. 7; and they reinstated priest and people in that covenant from which they had excluded themselves by inadvertent and involuntary violations of the ceremonial law.

But the blood of Christ, that spotless and voluntary victim, answered a far superior purpose; it purified the conscience from dead works 'to serve the living and true God.'

The expiations of the law were limited to sins of ignorance; the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ extended to the purification of the conscience, and therefore to voluntary acts.

These acts are described as *dead works;* repentance, or a change of mind with respect to which, is represented as one of the first principles of the Christian faith, ch. vii. 1: comp. xii. 17. The writer, as a Hebrew, is addressing Hebrews; and this change of mind with respect to dead works, we are led by the context

Inadvertent acts, of which the performer is often unconscious, sometimes occasion ceremonial pollution, and place men in an unholy and uncovenanted state: but such are restored to the privileges of the Mosaic covenant by the sacrifices and lustrations of the day of atonement, and by other rites, which were

Ch. IX. Ver. 14.

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to understand as a renunciation of the works of the law, as the ground of justification.

The works of the ceremonial law are with great propriety called *dead works*; they are dead, as being of no moral benefit either to the agent or to others; and they are dead, as the law passes an irrevocable sentence of death upon the wilful transgressor; they are works which leave the offender under a sentence of legal condemnation.

The blood of Christ purifies the conscience from *dead works*. The voluntary renunciation of the law as a ground of justification, which is the first requisition of the gospel, was the greatest offence against the law which a Hebrew could commit. But the offering of the blood of Christ in the celestial sanctuary purified the conscience from this offence; it obtained the pardon of the transgressor; it protected him from the sentence of the law; and set him at liberty to worship the living and true God, agreeably to the liberal and spiritual dispensation of the gospel.

All that the writer really means is, that the Mosaic dispensation being terminated by the death of Christ, who was the messenger of heaven to introduce the new and merciful dispensation of the gospel, all who believe are now released from the obligations of the ceremonial law, and are at liberty to worship God without restraint, agreeably to the mild and liberal spirit of the gospel.

But this doctrine, so offensive in its simple form to the prejudices of the Hebrews, the author has with great ingenuity dressed up in such a manner as would best meet the conceptions of his countrymen, and would greatly abate, if not altogether overrule, their objections to the obnoxious doctrines of a suffering Messiah and an abrogated law.

A similar instance of ingenuity in accommodating an unpalatable doctrine to the prejudices of his readers occurs ch. ii. 14, 15; where he describes the abolition of the law by the destruction of the devil, or the accusing power, through the death of Christ.

Ch. IX. Ver. 14.

not meant as compensations for transgression, but merely as solemn forms of readmission into the congregation of Israel, and restoration to public worship. How reasonable then is it to expect that a covenant ratified with the blood, not of animal victims, but of Jesus himself, the true Messiah, who by express divine direction submitted for this purpose as an innocent victim to a violent death, should as far excel the Mosaic œconomy, in the extent and value of its blessings, as in the mode of its confirmation! Such is the fact. The law made no provision for voluntary transgression: the soul that sinned presumptuously was condemned to death: but the blood of Christ, that spotless victim, extends its purifying influence to a voluntary act which, in the eye of the law, would be the greatest of offences, and upon which it would denounce its severest anathemas. I mean the absolute and total rejection of all its ceremonial institutions as the ground of justification, and as essential to our admission into the community of the people of God.

This renunciation of the unprofitable works of the law, the gospel, which requires faith alone as the ground of justification, absolutely demands; and from the condemning sentence of the law the believer is protected by the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin, and which, by ratifying the new covenant, cancels the obligation of the old; and by putting an end to the reign of the law, annihilates both its right to command and its authority to

condemn; and sets the believer at liberty to worship the living God with a spiritual service. Ch. IX. Ver. 14.

IV.

The writer shows that a new and better covenant required to be ratified by the blood of a new and nobler victim. Ch. ix. 15—24.

1. He states the necessity of introducing a new and a better covenant, ver. 15.

And for this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant[1], *that death having taken place for the redemption*[2] *of transgressions against the first covenant, they who are invited might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.* 15.

The law of works, as a ground of justification,

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[1] *The mediator of a new covenant.*] διαθηκης καινης· in the public version, *a new testament*, or *will*. But it is allowed by the most judicious critics that the context does not require this sudden change and unusual sense of the word διαθηκη. See Whitby, Peirce, Sykes, Doddridge, Wakefield, Newcome, &c.

The mediator: "that is, the person by whom it is transacted and confirmed." Newcome.

[2] *Death having taken place for the redemption.*] *Dead works*, that is, the *law of works*, being renounced, as a first principle under the gospel, the believer loses his standing in the first covenant, and is exposed to its anathemas. Hence the necessity of a new covenant of which Christ is the mediator, sanctioned by death, viz. the death of the mediator himself, as the victim; by the blood of which, all who had desecrated themselves by abandoning the old covenant, are reconsecrated and redeemed, or delivered from the curse, by the new; and so having been invited, and having accepted the gospel call, they become heirs of immortal life.

This seems to be the true meaning of the author in this passage; and it makes the sense of the context clear and obvious.

Ch. IX. Ver. 15. being thus voluntarily abdicated, as the first step towards faith in the gospel, the believer is thereby deprived of all benefit from the first covenant, which he has thus voluntarily discarded, and has exposed himself to all its anathemas. Hence arises the necessity of a new covenant to protect believers from the curses of the old: and this, in fact, is the gracious errand upon which Christ is sent. He is the mediator of a new covenant, appointed to transact business between the covenanting parties, to offer the terms, and to announce the promise: and moreover, as the victim by whose death the covenant is ratified, and by whose blood believers are as it were sprinkled and purified, he redeems and delivers them from the anathemas of the obsolete and superseded law, and reconsecrates them as the peculiar people of God under the new covenant, in a far better state than under the old dispensation: the promises of the former covenant being limited to an earthly and temporal, but those of the new being extended to a spiritual and everlasting inheritance.

2. This new covenant required the death of a suitable victim to ratify and confirm it, ver. 16, 17.

16. *For where a covenant exists, the death of that by which the covenant is confirmed*[1] *must be pro-*

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[1] *By which the covenant is confirmed.*] ὁ διαθεμενος. "whilst that which establishes the covenant is alive." Wakefield. See Whitby and Doddridge on the text. διαθεμενος properly signifies either a *testator*, or a *covenanter*. But the writer is not treating of a testament, but a covenant; and covenants, if not

duced[2]. *For a covenant* is *confirmed over dead* Ch. IX. Ver. 17.
victims, *and is of no force at all while that by which it is confirmed liveth.*

I have mentioned death, in connexion with the new covenant; for it is a usual thing to ratify covenants between man and man, as well as between God and man, with the blood of a victim offered upon the occasion. And where this is the rite agreed upon by the contracting parties for this purpose, the covenant has plainly no validity till the death of the victim is satisfactorily authenticated. For till the victim is slain, the covenant is without force, and either party is at liberty to recede from his engagement.

3. Agreeably to this state of things, the first covenant was ratified in blood; and every person and every thing was consecrated with blood, ver. 18—22.

Wherefore, even the first covenant *was not con-* 18.
firmed[3] *without blood. For after every command-* 19.

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uniformly, were frequently ratified in the blood of victims. In this case Christ, who is the mediator of the covenant, is himself the victim in whose blood it is both confirmed and consecrated; and if the word is taken in this sense, though a very unusual one, it gives a clear and pertinent meaning to a passage which is otherwise very obscure.

[2] *Be produced.*] φερεσθαι, a forensic term. "must be produced or producible, or else the whole transaction may be deemed not obligatory." Sykes.

Archbishop Newcome thinks that the 17th verse "has the appearance of an interpolation from one who supposed that διαθηκη signified a *testament* or *will*."

[3] *Was not confirmed.*] εγκεκαινισται. "dedicated." New-

Ch. IX. Ver. 19. *ment of the law had been spoken by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of the calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled the book itself and all the people,*
20. *saying, This is the blood of the covenant which*
21. *God hath enjoined you. And he sprinkled with blood in the same manner the tabernacle likewise,*
22. *and all the vessels of the ministry. And under the law, almost all things are purified with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission.*

With respect to the use of blood, there is a great analogy between the first covenant and the second. After the ten commandments had been delivered with an audible voice from mount Sinai, the assem-

come. "solemnized." Wakefield. Archbishop Newcome observes, that "the original word, *dedicated*, is used metaphorically for *confirmed*, because the blood of victims was shed at the dedications of holy things, as at the ratifications of covenants, Numb. vii. 88, 1 Kings viii. 62, 63." It is in both these senses that the efficacy of the blood of Jesus is represented by this writer; it confirms the new covenant, and it sanctifies believers; being, as it were, sprinkled upon them, it separates them from the unbelieving world as effectually as the ceremonial purifications of the first covenant.

The account of the first solemn ratification of the covenant is contained Exod. xxiv. 6—8. No mention is made of the goats, the water, the scarlet wool, or the hyssop; but Dr. Sykes observes, that "they might possibly be used during the ceremony of sprinkling." Nor is any mention made of sprinkling the book; which, however, is not improbable. In Lev. viii. there is an account of the consecration of the tabernacle and its furniture, but it is not said they were sprinkled with blood; they were sanctified by the anointing oil. "Though many things were purified with blood, some were purified with water alone, Exod. xix. 10, Lev. xvi. 28. Others by the water of separation, Numb. xix. 9, &c. Others were cleansed by fire, Numb. xxxi. 22, 23." Sykes.

It is plain that the writer did not mean to be literally correct.

bled congregation gave their explicit and solemn assent to them, and offered sacrifices of oxen to the Lord; and Moses sprinkled half the blood upon the altar, and the other half on the people, and announced it as the blood of the covenant which God had made with them, by which they were separated from the idolatrous world and consecrated to God: Exod. xxiv. 3—8. Upon other occasions other rites of purification were instituted; some by water, and some by fire, but very seldom without the shedding and sprinkling of blood. In this way the children of Israel were first separated, or consecrated, as a holy and peculiar people; and in this sense the sins of their heathen state are said to be remitted. Inanimate things likewise are *consecrated:* that is, set apart from a common to a holy purpose, by being sprinkled with blood; and being antecedently in a ceremonially unholy state, the law speaks of atonement being made for them, as though they had been actually sinners: and under the law there is no remission of offence, either in animate or inanimate beings; that is, there is no translation of them from a common to a sacred use, without the blood of the animal victim. See Lev. xvi. 18—20, 33. Ch. IX. Ver. 22.

Observe here, 1. That the account which this writer gives of the ceremony of sprinkling with blood as a ratification of the covenant and a rite of purification, does not agree in all its particulars with the narration of that fact in Exod. xxiv., where

Ch. IX. Ver. 22. no mention is made, either of the blood of goats, or of water, or of scarlet wool, or of hyssop; but only that Moses sprinkled the people, probably a few who stood near him, and who were representatives of the rest, with the blood of bullocks or calves. The disagreement is of no consequence, if inspiration is out of the question: it might be owing to a slip of memory, or it might be a tradition of the Jews. Neither does Moses mention the sprinkling of the book of the law; the circumstance, however, is not improbable, but to us is very immaterial.

2. It is of more importance to remark, that the tabernacle, the vessels of the service, and other inanimate things, are here represented as purified with blood; and of these it is said, that without shedding of blood there was no remission. In exact conformity to this, the priest is said, Lev. xvi. 18—23, by sprinkling of blood to make atonement for the altar, and to reconcile the holy place, the altar, and the tabernacle, as well as the priests and the congregation, ver. 33.

Inanimate beings are thus represented as sinners which need remission, atonement, and reconciliation, by the sprinkling of blood. The meaning is obvious. Previously to the lustration, they were in a profane and unholy state; by the application of that rite they were set apart and dedicated to the service of God.

This explains the sense in which the word *sinner* often occurs in the New Testament; and also that in which the blood of Christ is said to cleanse from

sin, for it is never said to atone for it. *They* are called *sinners* who live neither under the Mosaic nor under the Christian covenant; and who are therefore said to be in an unholy state, how excellent soever their moral character may be. And they are called *saints*, or *holy*, who publicly profess the Christian religion, whatever be the imperfection of their moral characters. And these are purified by the blood of Christ, because his death ratified the new covenant; and his blood is in a figurative sense said to be sprinkled upon believers, to separate them from the unbelieving world to the service and worship of God. Ch. IX. Ver. 22.

A person who does not attend to this sense of the words *sin* and *holiness* will lose much of the meaning and spirit of the apostolic writings.

4. By parity of reason, the heavenly sanctuary and its worshipers must be consecrated with the blood of a more excellent victim, ver. 23, 24.

It was *therefore necessary that the copies of things in the heavens should be purified with these* victims, *but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these*[1]. *Therefore Christ hath* 23. 24.

[1] *The heavenly things.*] Some have supposed that the writer means to insinuate, that heaven itself would be polluted by the presence of such sinful creatures as we are, if not previously purified by the blood of Jesus. See Doddridge. But this is widely distant from the author's view. He argues, that as the earthly tabernacle and its worshipers were purified by the blood of animal victims, so the heavenly tabernacle and its worshipers, *i. e.* the great body of believers, are to be purified and set apart by the blood of a better victim, viz. of Christ.

Ch. IX. Ver. 24. *not entered into a sanctuary made with hands, which is the resemblance of the true, but into heaven*[1] *itself, now to appear in the presence of God in our behalf.*

As, by divine appointment, it was necessary to separate the earthly tabernacle and its furniture, which were made after the celestial model, from a common to a sacred use, by sprinkling them with the blood of animal victims, it is equally necessary that the sanctuary in heaven, where our great high-priest officiates, should be consecrated for a similar purpose by the blood of a far more excellent victim, that is, of Christ himself: and for this end Christ has actually entered, not into the earthly sanctuary, but into that heavenly tabernacle which is the model of that made by Moses, and in this most holy and glorious place he produces his own blood before the throne of God, as that by which the Christian church and all its members are as it were sprinkled, separated from the unbelieving world, and consecrated to the service of God.

Thus the writer pleads, in order to conciliate the prejudices of the believing Hebrews, that as the

[1] *Into heaven itself:*] *i. e* into the celestial tabernacle which was shown to Moses in the Mount.

It is obvious to the attentive reader how promiscuously this author uses the expressions, *dedicated*, ver. 18, *purified*, *remitted*, ver. 22, as expressions of the same meaning, namely, *consecrated to God:* set apart from the unbelieving world; which is accomplished by the figurative sprinkling of the blood of Christ, not by his making atonement or satisfaction, or bearing the divine displeasure, or the expiation of human guilt.

actual sprinkling of the blood of the animal victims upon the worshipers and vessels of the Mosaic tabernacle was the symbol of their separation from a common to a sacred use, so the figurative sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, in the supposed celestial tabernacle, is the symbol of the separation of the worshipers in that heavenly sanctuary, that is, not saints in heaven, but the great body of Christians on earth, from the unbelieving world to the service of the true God. All this is figure and allegory accommodated to the conceptions and prejudices of the Hebrews, who were accustomed to the temple service. The great moral lesson which we learn from it is this, that Christians are, by their profession, consecrated to God, and that it is their indispensable duty to dedicate their time and all their powers to him, and to employ them in his service. Ch. IX. Ver. 24.

V.

The writer closes the argumentative part of the epistle by proving, at large, that it was not necessary that this illustrious victim should suffer more than once. Chap. ix. 25—x. 18.

1. He argues that the supposition of the necessity of repeating the sacrifice of the Messiah would involve a palpable and offensive absurdity, ver. 25, 26.

Nor indeed was it necessary[2] *that he should offer* 25.

[2] *Nor* was it necessary.] See Peirce and Newcome, who

Ch. IX. Ver. 26. *himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the most holy place* [1] *every year with other blood* [2] *(for then he must have suffered often* [3] *since the foundation of the world); but now he hath been manifested once, at the conclusion of the ages* [4], *to remove sin* [5], *by the sacrifice of himself.*

Nor let it be thought, my brethren, that accord-

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supply the ellipsis from ver. 23, though Peirce acknowledges the construction to be unusual. "To complete the sense, bring down αναγκη from ver. 23, and insert it after ωδε." Owen *apud* Bowyer.

[1] *The most holy place.*] ἁγια, the holy of holies. See Newcome.

[2] *With other blood:*] *i.e.* with the blood of an animal victim; not, like Jesus, with his own blood.

[3] *He must have suffered often.*] The writer reduces to an absurdity the supposition that the repetition of the Messiah's sacrifice was as necessary as the repetition of the high-priest's: *q. d.* You might as well say, that the Messiah's mission ought to have been as early as the age of Aaron, or even of Adam; and then you would have had as many suffering Messiahs as you had annual expiatory sacrifices; than which no supposition can be more revolting or absurd. No, this is not the constitution which God hath ordained: he hath sent forth the Messiah once for all, at the fittest season, at the close of the Mosaic dispensation, to put an end to sin, by putting an end to the covenant of rites and ceremonies, which was the great cause of offence, by offering himself a voluntary victim, to seal and ratify with his own blood that new dispensation by which the old covenant is superseded and abolished.

It is evident all along that he is addressing the Hebrews upon their own principles, labouring to reconcile them to the offensive doctrine of a crucified Messiah and an abrogated law, without the least allusion to a supposed atonement for the moral offences of mankind.

[4] *At the conclusion of the ages.*] At the end of the Mosaic dispensation. See Peirce, Mede, Doddridge, Wakefield. Compare ch. i. 2.

[5] *To remove sin:*] that is, the *law* which is the *strength of sin;* which first gives occasion to sin, and then condemns it without mercy. See Rom. vii.

ing to this way of stating the necessity and advantage of the voluntary suffering of the Messiah, it would be requisite for that illustrious victim to offer himself annually, as the high-priest offered his animal sacrifices on the day of atonement. This would indeed be a most unworthy thought: and, in fact, it might with equal reason be supposed that the annual sacrifice of a Messiah had been necessary from the beginning of time; than which nothing can be more extravagant or more revolting. But that is not our doctrine. What we teach is, that the great Messiah, the chief of all the prophets and messengers of God, has been revealed now, at last, at the conclusion of the Mosaic dispensation, by the voluntary sacrifice of himself once for all, to put an end at once, and for ever, not only to those sins of ignorance, which required annual expiation, but to those voluntary transgressions of the ceremonial law for which their sacrifices made no provision. And this he hath done by the utter and entire abolition of the law of ceremonies itself, if not as a rule of practice, yet altogether as a ground of justification. We are now no longer under the law, but under grace. Ch. IX. Ver. 26.

2. The frequent repetition of the death of the Messiah would be inconsistent with his nature and condition as a human being: his return, therefore, is not to be expected till his final appearance, ver. 27, 28.

And as it is appointed unto men[6] *to die once,* 27.

[6] *Appointed unto men.*] Mr. Peirce observes, that "the au-

Ch. IX. Ver. 28. *and after this the judgement, so Christ also having been offered once to bear away the sin* [1] *of many* [2], *to those who are waiting for him, will appear a second time, without sin* [3], *unto salvation.*

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thor had several times asserted, that Christ was made like to us in all things; and this consideration he seems to allege in this place in order to clear what he says of Christ's only dying once. By dying once, he submits to the condition they were in for whom he died; but being freed from death, he has no more occasion than they to die any more."

[1] *To bear away sin.*] "The Greek phrase is only used here and 1 Pet. ii. 24." Archbishop Newcome; who observes, that "some suppose an allusion to the scape-goat Lev. xvi. 20—22." See also Macknight; who translates it, *to carry away.* But Jesus is compared to the victim which was sacrificed, not to that which was suffered to escape. To take away sin, therefore, is the same as to remove or abolish it, ver. 26: that is, by the figurative sprinkling of his blood all sin or legal disqualification was removed. "αναφερω, *sursum fero—sacrificium offero—aufero, tollo.*" Schleusner.

[2] *Many:*] *i. e.* all mankind, Jew or Gentile; there is no legal impediment to prevent any who are willing from entering into this covenant. For this extensive application of the word *many*, see Rom. v. 19, Matt. xxvi. 28. "to bear away the sins of all." Wakefield.

[3] *Without sin.*] χωρις ἁμαρτιας, *without a sin-offering.* See 2 Cor. v. 21. Newcome. The writer continues the same allusion. Christ, the high-priest of the new dispensation, having offered himself a sacrifice for sin, enters into the celestial holy of holies with his own blood, like the high-priest on the day of atonement into the earthly sanctuary with the blood of his animal victims. And, like the Jewish high-priest, he will at the appointed time appear again: not, however, till the consummation of all things, when he shall come to accomplish the hopes of those who have placed their confidence in him. He will then appear, not like the Levitical high-priest, to return again into the sanctuary at the stated season with the same victims; nor, as he himself once entered, to put an end to sin by the sacrifice of himself. He will have done with sin altogether. And as the high-priest issues from the holy of holies, after having finished the services of the day of atonement, in his golden dress, announcing pardon and reconciliation, and com-

You remember, my brethren, that in the former part of this epistle I represented to you that our great teacher and master was, not a being of a different species, and of superior rank, but a man like ourselves, in all respects like other men. Now, it would be greatly inconsistent with the state and condition of a human being to be repeatedly subject to the stroke of death: nor is any thing of this kind intended in his case. But as it is the general lot of the children of Adam to resign their breath at the time appointed by God; and after this, in some future period, to rise again, and to be fixed in a state of happiness or misery correspondent to their respective characters, and to die no more; so Jesus, the Messiah, has died once, and will also appear again. He died a voluntary sacrifice for all mankind, to set aside all legal ceremonial disqualifications, and to open a way for the admission of all believers, without distinction, to the blessings of the new covenant. But, as he is now gone into the celestial sanctuary, as our high-priest, to present his offered blood, so, like the high-priest of the Mosaic

Ch. IX. Ver. 28.

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manding the silver trumpets of the Jubilee to sound, so Christ will appear in robes of majesty and glory, to announce that the reign of sin and death is for ever closed; that the era of life, and joy, and everlasting triumph is begun; and that those who by patient continuance in well doing, have been seeking for glory, honour, and immortality, shall now find all the promises fulfilled, all their expectations exceeded, and that they have not in vain trusted to a merciful and faithful Creator. This beautiful allusion to the return of the high-priest from the sanctuary on the day of atonement in his golden dress, to announce the Jubilee, is borrowed by Dr. Doddridge from Limborch.

Ch. IX. Ver. 28. institute, who, at the close of the solemn rites of the day of atonement, appeared to the people in the glory of his magnificent attire to announce their reinstatement in the covenant with God, and at the proper season to proclaim the year of jubilee; in the same manner will our exalted high-priest in due season return again, not in the mean and humble form in which he appeared before, when he came to offer a sacrifice for his own purification and that of his followers, but he will appear in his own and his Father's glory to close the dispensations of divine providence, to rescue his faithful disciples from the power of the grave, to put them into possession of the kingdom prepared for them, to fulfill every promise, and to exceed every expectation and every hope.

3. The Jewish scriptures foretell one great efficacious sacrifice, which should supersede all the inefficient sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual, ver. 1—10.

1.) If the legal sacrifices had been of sufficient value and efficacy, they would have ceased long ago, ver. 1—3.

Ch. X. Ver. 1. *Wherefore*[1], *the law having a shadow of future good things*[2], and *not the originals*[3] *themselves, is*

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[1] *Wherefore.*] γαρ, *for*, the reason of the preceding assertion. See Newcome. Or, according to Macknight, *wherefore*, introducing an inference: see ver. 4. Perhaps *moreover*, introducing a collateral argument. See Peirce.

[2] *Future good things:*] "*i. e.* the kingdom of glory in heaven." Newcome. See also Peirce and Sykes. More probably the blessings of the dispensation of the Messiah. Col. ii. 17.

by no means able, with the same sacrifices which Ch. X.
are offered every year, to make those who present
themselves[4] *perfect*[5] *for ever*[6]. *For then these* Ver. 2.
offerings would have ceased[7]; *because the wor-*
shipers being once purified would have had no more
consciousness of sin; whereas in those sacrifices 3.
there *is a yearly acknowledgement of sin.*

I have another argument to advance, to satisfy you that the Messiah need not to die more than once: it is derived from the representations of the holy and prophetic scriptures. I have already observed that the Mosaic tabernacle and its costly furniture were but a faint resemblance of that far more splendid sanctuary which Moses saw, and in which it was intended that our great high-priest should officiate. It could not therefore be supposed that

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[3] *The originals.*] So εικων in this connexion must be understood. See Peirce. The tabernacle shown to Moses in the Mount, in which Jesus is represented as now officiating. "Εικων, *res ac veritas: ipsa rerum substantia.*" Rosenmuller.

[4] *Who present themselves.*] τους προσερχομενους. See Wakefield. "The same as λατρευοντας, *the worshipers,* in the next verse." Peirce.

[5] *Perfect.*] τελειους· *i. e.* consecrated, ceremonially holy. See ch. vii. 11, 19, 28, ix. 9. Mr. Peirce and others erroneously interpret it as signifying *entirely free from guilt:* forgetting that the writer is here treating of ceremonial impurity only.

[6] *For ever.*] εις το διηνεκες. See ver. 14. Wakefield, Newcome. This is undoubtedly the true arrangement, though commonly joined with the preceding clause: *v. g.* year after year continually.

[7] *Would have ceased.*] See Wakefield. The Syriac, Vulgate, and Æthiopic versions want the negative particle; which, being retained in the common copies, makes it necessary to read the sentence with an interrogation: "Would they not have ceased to be offered?"

Ch. X. Ver. 3. the annual sacrifices offered, by the appointment of Moses, on the day of atonement, should be a permanent and perpetual consecration of the worshipers. Had they been such, they would not have been repeated. For if, being once consecrated, they had been consecrated for ever, they would have known that they had been so, and would not have imagined themselves to have been in a condition which required repeated sacrifices and purifications. Whereas, in fact, the annual solemnities of the day of atonement were a perpetual memorial, that by errors and transgressions they had excluded themselves from the privileges of that covenant in which they were thus reinstated.

2.) Hence the writer infers the incompetency of animal victims to effect permanent sanctification, ver. 4.

4. *Wherefore*[1] it is *impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

The appointment of the annual sacrifice proves that the efficacy of those sacrifices lasted only from year to year; and that the blood of animal victims, though it answered the purpose for a limited time, could not completely purify the people, and perma-

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[1] *Wherefore.*] γαρ. In the illative sense. "*Besides.*" Macknight. See ver. 1. The animal victims were offered yearly; therefore they could not completely remove ceremonial pollution. The writer is far from meaning to say, that though animal blood could not purify from moral evil, the blood of Jesus could. This is quite foreign to his argument.

nently deliver them from their ceremonial and legal disqualifications. Ch. X. Ver. 4.

3.) The writer, to establish his doctrine, cites a pertinent passage from the Psalms of David, ver. 5—7.

Wherefore one *when he cometh into the world saith*[2], *Sacrifice and offering thou choosest not, a body hast thou prepared for me*[3]: *in burnt offer-* 5. 6.

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[2] *He saith.*] The passage cited is Psalm xl. 6—8. Archbishop Newcome remarks, that "the words of the Psalm from the LXX. version are here accommodated. A great Christian truth is expressed in them, and no reasoning from them is intended." The Psalmist is commonly understood as speaking in the person of Christ.

Dr. Sykes, however, contends that the fortieth Psalm is no prophecy of Christ, nor is it cited as such, nor is Christ the speaker in this quotation, nor is he represented as such by the author, who only cites a few verses from the Psalm, alleging the authority of David to prove, that under the Mosaic dispensation itself sacrifices were held in no estimation in comparison with the practice of virtue and obedience to the will of God. He shows that the difficulties which occur in attempting to interpret the Psalm as the language of the Messiah are insurmountable. He interprets the whole, therefore, as the language of David. There is no mystery in the phrase *coming into the world*: "They are the words," says Dr. Sykes, "of one who lived many hundred years before Christ came into the world. They are the words of the Psalmist, and they agree to him. They are descriptive of the Psalmist himself, who from a low and mean condition was advanced by God's providence to be a mighty king. And he declares expressly the little worth of sacrifices, and says that the only thing which could make a man acceptable to God was the doing his will: Surely his authority was rightly urged."

[3] *A body hast thou prepared for me.*] σωμα κατηρτισω μοι. In the Hebrew, "mine ears hast thou opened," or *digged*, or *bored*. Supposed to be an allusion to the law which required that a servant, if he chose to bind himself to his master for life, should

Ch X. Ver. 7. *ings and in sin offerings thou hast no complacency. Then I said, Behold I come; in the volume of the book*[1] *it is written of me to do thy will, O God.*

That the comparative insignificance of these often repeated sacrifices is not unduly estimated by me, and that I am not alone in my judgement of them, is evident from the strong language of David in the

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have his ear bored through with an awl. Exod. xxi. 6, Deut. xv. 17. Mr. Peirce prefers the reading of the LXX., from which this writer cites the passage: and by ingenious conjectures he shows in what way the Hebrew might have been corrupted; which, however, he believes to have agreed with the LXX. when the epistle was written. Peirce applies the whole fortieth Psalm to Christ, and endeavours to show that it contains nothing inconsistent with that supposition. He, with the whole stream of commentators, applies this clause to what is called the incarnation of Christ.

Newcome adopts the conjecture of Lambert Bos, that the original reading in the Greek was, ὠτια, *ears*. See Bowyer. But the writer alludes to the word σωμα, ver. 10, which plainly shows how he read the text; and is perhaps an indication that he quotes the passage as the words of Christ, whether allusively or otherwise. Dr. Sykes says, "The meaning is, Thou hast given me a body, strength, constitution, whereby I am enabled to do thy will, and I am resolved to do it for ever." He adds, "one thing seems very clear from this citation, that this epistle was written originally in Greek, and not in Hebrew; and that we have it in its native language, and not in a translation."

[1] *In the volume of the book.*] εν κεφαλιδι. "In what book was this written concerning David? Ans. The promise made to Abraham was, 'Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.' Gen. xv. 18. This will of God was not accomplished by any who lived before David. He having subdued all opposition, to the river Euphrates, might properly say, that it was *written of him* that he should *do the will of God*. Κεφαλις was the first roll, or volume of a book, with the title prefixed. When David here speaks of the head or first volume of the book, he says plainly enough that this was written of him in the book of Genesis, and there we find it." Sykes.

fortieth psalm; in which he alludes to the power of God, in raising him from a very low condition to a situation of great dignity and importance, though surrounded with many difficulties; and expresses his firm determination to obey the will of God with all his heart, as what he knew would be far more acceptable than the most costly sacrifices he could offer. He acknowledges the interposition of God in the predictions of his advancement and success, which had been transmitted in the books of Moses, and which had been fulfilled in him. He is thankful for the means of instruction which had been afforded him, for the capacity which he possessed of executing the divine purpose, and expresses his determination above all things to obey the commandments of God, in comparison with which the whole ceremonial institute was of no value; *q. d.* Thou takest no pleasure in offerings or sacrifices of any description, and therefore my chief concern shall be to execute thy whole pleasure every where, and at all times, agreeably to the precepts of thy righteous law, and then I am sure that I shall obtain thy favour. Ch. X. Ver. 7.

4.) The writer comments upon the text, and argues from it that the Levitical sacrifices are superseded by the great Sacrifice of Christ, ver. 8—10. 8.

After saying first[2], *Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt offerings, and sacrifices for sin thou dost not choose, neither hast pleasure in them which are*

[2] *After saying first.*] So Wakefield. ανωτερον λεγων. "Above he saith." Newcome.

Ch. X. Ver. 9. *offered according to the law, he saith next, Behold, I come to do thy will*[1]. *He removeth the first*[2], 10. *that he may establish the second. By which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ*[3] *once-for-all.*

Now, my brethren, if you will permit me to accommodate the words of David to our present subject, and to argue upon them as though the Messiah were the speaker, you observe that he first represents all the Levitical sacrifices of every kind as of no value in the sight of God, and as affording him no pleasure even though they were rites of his own appointment: not indeed that they were really displeasing and offensive. The Psalmist speaks comparatively. The Messiah, whom I assume as the speaker, declares that they are of no efficacy in comparison with that which he was about to offer in obedience to the will of his Father and his God.

And let me particularly direct your attention to this circumstance in particular. The speaker does not represent the sacrifices required by the law, and that offering which in duty to God was presented by the Messiah, as contemporary sacrifices, but suc-

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[1] *Thy will.*] The received text adds ὁ Θεος, *O God*, which is wanting in the best copies, and dropped by Griesbach.

[2] *He removeth the first.*] "He abolisheth the former will and prescription of God concerning legal sacrifices, that he may establish the latter concerning the sacrifice of Christ." Peirce. "He speaks negatively of sacrifices, the stronger to establish the obligation of doing the will of God." Sykes.

[3] *The body of Jesus Christ.*] *i. e.* Jesus Christ himself, see ver. 5. This allusion shows that σωμα was the reading of the LXX. where the author of the epistle cited the text.

cessive. The first are removed out of the way, to make room for the latter. The sacrifices of the law are superseded by the far superior sacrifice of the gospel: that sacrifice, which was a great act of filial obedience in him by whom it was presented, and on that account most highly acceptable to God. I mean that one sacrifice of his own person on the cross, by which he consecrated both himself and all his followers once for all, and which being itself the seal and ratification of the new covenant which abolishes the old, puts an end to all the claims of the law, and to all its ceremonial injunctions and pollutions, and makes it impossible for those who are once sanctified and received into covenant to desecrate themselves again. Ch. X. Ver. 10.

4. The advancement of Christ to dignity and dominion proves that the sacrifice which he offered was sufficient to accomplish every necessary purpose without repetition, ver. 11—14.

And indeed every high-priest[4] *continueth ministering from time to time*[5], *and offering frequently the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.* 11.

The high-priests under the law, from year to

[4] *Every high-priest.*] The Alexandrine and Clermont manuscripts, and the Syriac and Æthiopic versions, read αρχιερευς, *high-priest*; which indeed the connexion requires, as the writer has been speaking of no other. See Peirce.

[5] *From time to time.*] Gr. "from day to day." Peirce remarks, that καθ' ἡμεραν is applied to the high-priest ch. vii. 27, and may denote nothing more than the expression *from time to time*.

Ch. X. Ver. 11. year, upon the day of atonement, enter into the holy of holies, offering continually their animal sacrifices, whose effect only lasts for a year; at the expiration of which the same sacrifices must be repeated in order to renew the violated covenant.

12. *But this* priest[1], *after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever*[2], *sat down at the right hand of*
13. *God, waiting, after this, till his enemies be made his footstool*[3].

Our great high-priest, having entered into the heavenly sanctuary to present that acceptable sacrifice which was to ratify the new covenant, and to put a final period to all the transgressions and sacrifices of the old; having performed the duties of his priestly office, was put into possession of his regal dignity; being appointed head and governor of the universal church. And he is now waiting at the right hand of God in full confidence in the divine promise, that his dominion shall be universal; that error, idolatry, and vice, shall be subdued by the power of truth, and that even death itself shall ultimately be destroyed.

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[1] *But this* priest.] ὁυτος, this *man*. "Christ." Wakefield. The received text reads αυτος, *he*. See Griesbach.

[2] *For sins for ever*.] "after offering for ever one sacrifice." Wakefield. For this construction see Bowyer. Having finished his priestly he assumed his regal office, as a priest after the order of Melchisedec: Psalm cx. 1.

[3] *His enemies be made his footstool*.] Οἱ ἐχθροι *sunt, quicquid impedit salutem quam Christus suis impetrare voluit, scelera, superstitio, idololatria, et mors ipsa ut explicat Paulus* 1 Cor. xv. 26.

Therefore, his *one offering*[4] *hath made those who are sanctified*[5] *perfect for ever*[6]. Ch. X. Ver. 14.

We may therefore justly conclude, that as Christ is exalted to dignity and dominion, his sacrifice has been accepted and needeth not to be repeated. All those who believe in him, or who, in successive generations, may by faith become members of that holy community of which he is the head, will be considered as sprinkled with the blood of the federal victim, and as incapable of desecrating themselves again by any transgressions of the ceremonial law. In other words, the first covenant being superseded by the second, which is confirmed by the death of

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[4] *Therefore* his *one offering.*] γαρ, *therefore.* See Macknight. The exaltation of Christ to his throne proves that his one offering had been accepted, μια προσφορα, in the nominative case. See Bengel *ap.* Bowyer, and Wakefield.

[5] *Those who are sanctified.*] ἁγιαζομενους, those who having discarded *dead works*, the works of the law, ch. ix. 14, have entered by faith into the holy community of which Christ is the head.

[6] *Perfect for ever.*] See ch. vii. 11, ix. 9, x. 1. So perfectly free from all legal, or ceremonial offences, voluntary or involuntary, as never to be liable to them again: the law of works being completely superseded by the law of faith, that new covenant of which Christ is the mediator, and his death the seal. The meaning is obscurely expressed by Peirce: "by his one offering he hath made an expiation, which avails perpetually to render all those who partake of the virtue of it completely qualified for the worship of God." This learned writer, and the generality of modern commentators, perplex themselves and darken the meaning of the author, by imputing to the death of tthe Messiah an expiatory influence for moral offences, when the writer only means to satisfy he Hebrews that the death of Christ has put an end to the Mosaic institute, the law of works; and that of course it for ever supersedes the necessity of sacrifices to those who believe in Christ.

Ch. X. Ver. 14. Christ, nothing but wilful transgression of its moral precepts can exclude the believer from its privileges and promises.

5. The Jewish scriptures themselves, by declaring the complete remission of sins under the new covenant, virtually announce that all sacrifices are at an end, ver. 15—18.

15. *And the holy spirit also beareth testimony*[1] *to*
16. *us; for after having first announced, This* is *the covenant which I will make with them in those days, the Lord saith*[2], *I will put my laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them upon their minds;*
17. *and* he addeth[3], *Their sins and their iniquities I*
18. *will remember no more. Now where remission of these* is, *there is no more* any *sacrifice for sin*[4].

And now to bring my argument to a conclusion. The doctrines which I have advanced in the course of it must, I know, my brethren, have been very

[1] *The spirit beareth testimony.*] "The holy ghost concurs with us in the truth of what we have been saying." Sykes. See Peirce. With what address the writer at the close of his argument appeals to the testimony of the prophetic scriptures: a testimony which would have the greatest weight with those to whom he was writing!

[2] *The Lord saith.*] For this construction see Markland, Owen, Bowyer, Griesbach. *I will put my laws.* The LXX. reads διδες δωσω, which makes the construction complete.

[3] *And* he addeth, &c.] These words in the prophet follow at some distance from those before cited, and should be marked as not being a continued citation. See Markland in Bowyer. Jer. xxxi. 32, 34.

[4] *No more sacrifice for sin.*] So that the very scriptures themselves lead to the conclusion that all sacrifices shall be abolished; and the Levitical law of course superseded.

offensive to your earliest and most cherished prepossessions. A suffering Messiah, and an abrogated law, are revolting to your feelings: and yet, with respect to the former, I trust that you will allow, upon calm reflection, that there is nothing disgraceful to the Messiah, or inconsistent with the dignity of his character, in his once offering himself up as a victim to ratify the new and better covenant before he took possession of his regal office. And as to the latter, the inspired prophetic writings expressly announce the abolition of the old covenant, and the substitution of the new. In that very prophecy of Jeremiah which I have lately cited, ch. xxxi. 32, God himself, after having foretold that he is about to introduce a new covenant, the laws of which, instead of being engraven on tables of stone, should be inscribed on the tables of the heart; or, in other words, the precepts of which would be so few and simple that all might understand, retain and practise them; in the continuation of the prophecy adds these remarkable words,—"Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more." Now you cannot suppose that God means to say, that under the new covenant he will overlook all moral guilt. Far from it. It is very true that he will freely and graciously pardon all offences, however great and aggravated, which are truly repented of and forsaken: a declaration which was frequently made under the old covenant. But the sins here spoken of are those legal offences, for the remission of which sacrifices were provided under the old Mosaic dis- Ch. X. Ver. 18.

Ch. X. Ver. 18. pensation: ceremonial pollutions; offences against holy rites, holy times, holy places, and restrictions relating to food. All these shall be abolished: they shall have no existence under the new dispensation: the one sacrifice of Christ has put an end to them all, by introducing a new and better covenant. But if the offences are abolished, the penalties are of course abolished too. Where there is no transgression, no remission is necessary, no sacrifices are required. The covenant into which you have now entered is a law of liberty.

Such is the reasoning, and such the conclusion, of this pious and eloquent, but uninspired writer. His main and obvious design is to reconcile the believing but unstable Hebrews to the revolting doctrines of a suffering Messiah, and an abrogated law: and he produces arguments which, though not all strictly logical, nor correctly scriptural, are many of them valid, some of them very ingenious, and all of them such as would be acceptable to the taste of the age in which they were written, and were calculated to produce the desired effect upon those to whom they were addressed.

It is sometimes difficult to make out the writer's meaning; but I am inclined to think that the difficulty lies more in the prejudices of the reader, than in the style of the writer. His object is simple and intelligible: he never deviates from his main design; and he is very much in earnest in the prosecution of it. To us, who live in a remote age and

country, and under different opinions, habits, and laws, the abolition of the Mosaic ritual is a matter of indifference; and we have no prejudices against a crucified Messiah. But to a Jew, the law was every thing. The Mosaic institute was the great charter of his rights and privileges: it distinguished his nation from all others as the chosen favourites of God. To be told, therefore, that this law was to be repealed, and these privileges were to be laid open to the Gentile world, was the bitterest mortification to Jewish pride; and the subject required to be treated with a very delicate hand. This is the true key to the interpretation of this celebrated epistle. Ch. X. Ver. 18.

But the mass of modern critics having their imaginations occupied with the persuasion that the death of Christ was, some how or other, an expiation for the moral offences of mankind, an idea which never crossed the mind of the writer of this epistle, mix up this notion, of which their minds are full, with all which this writer advances upon the subject of ceremonial pollutions and Levitical sacrifices; by which means they miss the true meaning of the author, and involve themselves and their readers in inextricable difficulties; of which we have many instances in the notes of those pious, learned, and laborious expositors, Mr. Peirce and Dr. Sykes[1]. If the present writer has succeeded better

[1] *Mr. Peirce and Dr. Sykes.*] It is curious, and even amusing, to see how these and other ingenious commentators writhe under the pressure of difficulties of their own formation, and

Ch. X. Ver. 18.

in elucidating this epistle than his learned and able predecessors, it is entirely owing to the help which they have supplied, and to his having happily escaped from those popular and erroneous opinions in which they, with all their learning, piety, ability, and integrity, were much entangled, and by which they were misled.

The remainder of the epistle consists chiefly of practical advices and exhortations, adapted to the circumstances and views of the Hebrew believers, and urged with great eloquence and force.

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the pains and ingenuity which they display in their contrivances to darken a clear text, and to accommodate the language of the writer to their own preconceived hypothesis. And that without any suspicion that they have misconceived his meaning.

Thus, ch. vii. 28, where the writer speaks of Christ as offering sacrifice for his own sins as well as those of the people, meaning his ceremonial disqualification for the priestly office, as being of the tribe of Judah; the commentators, misled by their unscriptural notion of an atonement for sin, almost unanimously, and without hesitation, flatly contradict the author, by saying, that Christ needed it not, and did not offer any such sacrifice for himself. And again, ch. x. 14, where the writer asserts that "one offering has for ever perfected them that are sanctified:" meaning nothing more than this, that believers in Christ were for ever exempted from the danger of committing any ceremonial offences; a position which his Hebrew readers would perfectly understand: commentators are greatly puzzled in their attempts to reconcile this assertion to their mystical notions concerning the atonement made by Christ for the sins of the world, to which they imagine that the author here alludes. Dr. Sykes, in his long note upon ch. x. 18, shows how much he is gravelled by the broad assertions of this writer; which however are literally true, according to his own sense of them, though not easily reconcileable to certain modern doctrines, however fashionable or popular.

PART THE SECOND.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINES ESTABLISHED.

SECTION I.

THE WRITER, entering upon the Practical Part of the Epistle, presses upon the believing Hebrews a stedfast adherence to their Christian profession, and suggests many considerations to guard them against apostasy. Ch. x. 19—37. Ch. X.

1. The writer urges the believing Hebrews to a cordial acceptance of the Christian doctrine, which releases them from the terrors of the law, ver. 19—22.

Having, therefore, brethren, liberty of entrance into the most holy place[1] *by the blood of Jesus*[2], Ver. 19.

[1] *Liberty of entrance into the most holy place.*] παρρησιαν. "full liberty to go into the sanctuary." Wakefield. Though almost all the expositors interpret this of heaven, yet the connexion clearly shows that it must signify the Christian covenant, typified by the celestial tabernacle exhibited to Moses in the Mount, in which Jesus, our high-priest, is represented as officiating.

[2] *By the blood of Jesus:*] *i. e.* as the high-priest went into the most holy place purified with the blood of the animal victim, so we, sprinkled with the blood of Christ, may enter into the heavenly sanctuary, *i. e.* the Christian covenant.

Ch. X. Ver. 20. *which* entrance *he hath consecrated for us* [1], *a lately opened and living way* [2], *through the veil, that is,* 21. *his flesh* [3]; *and having a high-priest over the family of God,* 22. *let us approach* [4] *with a true heart, in full assurance of faith* [5], *having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience* [6].

Having stated what appeared to be needful to re-

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[1] *Consecrated for us.*] "When the temple was rebuilt and set apart for religious purposes, it was called its *encænia* (consecration), Ezra vi. 16; when, therefore, the law of Moses was laid aside and its ceremonies removed, and another means to the favour of God was established, the same term was very properly employed." Sykes.

[2] *A lately opened and living way.*] "προσφατον, propriè recens dictum, deinde generatim recens: cui opponitur παλαιφατον. Ὁδος ζωσα, amœna, jucunda: ut regio amœna dicitur vitam nobis reddere." Rosenmuller. "*A living way,* a way to life." Sykes. Faith is the new and living way, in opposition to the old way of dead works, the works of the law. See ver. 22.

[3] *The veil, that is, his flesh.*] Many suppose an allusion to the incarnation of Christ, but without necessity. The doctrine of the epistle is, that the death of Christ put an end to the old covenant and introduced the new. To this event probably the writer alludes, as the medium of access to the sanctuary. *through the veil,* that is, through *his flesh:* q. d. through himself, through his death and the sprinkling of his blood.

[4] *Let us approach.*] προσερχωμεθα. "let us come to that place to which we may have free access, and to which we are so graciously invited." Sykes.

[5] *Full assurance of faith.*] "*plena fide et fiducia.*" Rosenmuller. This explains what he means by the new and living way, ver. 20. "In full conviction of mind that Jesus is the Christ, and of the consequences of that great and important truth." Sykes.

[6] *Sprinkled.*] An allusion to the purification of persons and things under the law by the sprinkling of blood: Heb. ix. 9, Numb. xix. 2—10. With minds free from all scruples relating to the precepts or the anathemas of the abrogated law. Mr. Peirce justly observes, that the 22d verse should end at this clause, which ends the sentence in most of the Greek copies.

concile your minds to the offensive doctrines of a suffering Messiah, and an abrogated law, and having shown that, notwithstanding all the external simplicity of the Christian institution, it may still boast of a priest and lawgiver, of a temple and a service, of a sacrifice and of a sanctuary, far more glorious than that of Moses, permit me now, my beloved brethren, to press upon your consideration some of the important practical consequences which naturally follow from the facts which I have established. Ch. X. Ver. 22.

And first, be true to the principles you have adopted, and allow them their proper weight and influence upon your minds: and, seeing that all who believe have free access, through the blood of Jesus, into the celestial sanctuary, by that path which leads to life, which he has so lately opened and consecrated, through the veil of his humiliation and sufferings, into the most holy place, into which he is already entered, and where he is ever ready, as the high-priest of our profession, to present the children of the family at the mercy-seat of their God and Father, let us, my brethren, enter boldly into the sanctuary and lay claim to our privilege. Let us be Christians indeed, undaunted by difficulties, unfettered by prejudices: let us be strong in faith and upright in heart; and, being sprinkled with the blood of the new covenant, let us shake off the fetters of the old; nor let us torment ourselves with groundless apprehensions of any evil consequences of those anathemas which the abrogated law may

Ch. X. Ver. 22. denounce against such who withdraw their allegiance from its obsolete requisitions.

2. Having made profession of their faith in baptism, he exhorts them to adhere stedfastly to the Christian doctrine, to govern their lives by Christian principles, and to unite with their brethren in Christian communion, ver. 22—29.

23. *And having had* our *bodies washed*[1] *with pure water, let us hold fast the profession of* our *hope*[2] *unmoved: for he that hath promised* is *faithful.*
24. *And let us consider one another, that we may pro-*
25. *voke to love*[3] *and to good works: not leaving off the assembling of ourselves*[4] *together,* as *the custom*

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[1] *Our bodies washed.*] Peirce observes, that the writer here speaks of the initiatory rite of baptism; and that if moral purity had been intended, χειρας, *the hands,* would probably have been used, instead of σωμα, *the body.* Some think that an allusion is intended to the washing of the high-priest previously to his entering the most holy place. Lev. xvi. 4.

[2] *The profession of* our *hope.*] Our translators read *faith,* upon the authority of one manuscript only: *hope* is unquestionably the authentic reading. See Griesbach.

[3] *Provoke to love.*] Mr. Peirce thinks that the author glances at some misconduct of the Hebrew Christians to the Gentile converts; and observes, that "the verse is happily translated in the public version, the word *provoke* having a middle signification like παροξυσμος in the original.

[4] *Not leaving off the assembling ourselves.*] επισυναγωγην, "for public worship. Some deserted these assemblies through fear of persecution." Newcome. Peirce supposes an allusion to the prejudices of the Jewish against the Gentile Christians, which induced them to forsake the Christian assemblies upon account of the Gentiles being admitted into them. The word occurs but once more in the New Testament, 2 Thess. ii. 1; where it signifies the gathering together to Christ at the day of judgement, to which Sykes supposes there may be an allusion

of some is, *but exhorting* to it, *and so much the more as ye see the day approaching* [5]. Ch. X. Ver. 25.

Having been baptized as an emblem of our purification from all ceremonial pollution, and as a symbol of initiation into the Christian covenant, let us stedfastly adhere to those principles which we profess, and which lie at the foundation of our immortal hope. And since our faith and hope rest upon the promise of a faithful and unchangeable God, we have

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here. Or it may signify, *q. d.* "Do not leave off the assembling yourselves together, and thereby making a public profession of your faith. Some of you seem ashamed of the gospel, and keep away from all public meetings, not considering their true use." "not abandoning our association in the gospel." Wakefield. Peirce thinks that the writer uses the word επισυναγωγην that he may not be supposed to recommend attending at the synagogue.

"The Gnostics," says Dr. Priestley, "laid no stress on public worship, or any of the positive institutions of religion. They had no regular officiating ministers or places of worship; and by this means they more easily escaped persecution. But the apostle insists upon a very different system, urging the importance of public assemblies of Christians, which answer several very excellent purposes. One is, that of an open profession of Christianity, to which all Christians are bound; another is that of public instruction; and a third of no less consequence is, that of forming Christians into a regular body, connecting them together, and thus bringing them under an obligation to mutual exhortation and assistance; which in time of persecution is of the greatest use."

"*deserere την επισ. deficere a religione Christiana. Sed verba καθως εθος τισι, hanc interpretationem vix admittere videntur. Omnia autem optime adhærent, si cogites, hanc negligentiam in frequentandis cœtibus Christianis fuisse initium defectionis ab ipsa religione.*" Rosenmuller.

[5] *The day approaching.*] The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which Jesus had foretold: the accomplishment of which prophecy was then visibly approaching. "The great day of retribution coming on, as our life draws to an end, and the danger of death is increased by persecution." Newcome.

Ch. X. Ver. 25. a sure foundation for steady confidence. Therefore, let our Christian principles produce their proper effect upon our conduct: and, instead of watching each other, in order to discover something amiss in each other's temper, views, or conduct, to justify or palliate the use of bitter and exasperating language, let us rather emulate each other's excellencies, and vie with each other in good will and good works. Remembering that we profess one common faith, and are united under one common head, let us not quarrel upon lesser points, nor desert Christian assemblies, as some do, for differences of opinion concerning rites and ceremonies which now cease to be obligatory. Instead of this uncandid behaviour, let us exhort each other to Christian communion, and to a regular attendance on social worship, and the rather as you cannot but remark, from the commotions which are taking place in different parts of Judea and its neighbourhood, that the great day of calamity and destruction, so solemnly and explicitly foretold by Christ, cannot be far distant. At this season security and peace are promised to the true disciples of Jesus amidst great national calamity and desolation: it is therefore of the utmost importance that you should not forfeit your claim to this privilege by excluding yourselves from Christian assemblies.

The writer here touches, but very gently, lest he should give offence, upon the extreme jealousy which the Jewish Christians entertained of the Gentile con-

verts, and of their unwillingness to hold communion with them unless they would submit to the rites of the law; and the argument he urges would come home very powerfully to their personal feelings. For, by excluding themselves from the communion of the church, they excluded themselves from its privileges, and from that protection which Christ had promised his disciples in the day of national desolation: while, therefore, they were giving vent to their spleen and prejudice against the Gentile converts, they were inadvertently exposing themselves to the greatest personal danger, and placing themselves out of the protection of the divine promise. Ch. X. Ver. 25.

3. The writer warns them earnestly against apostasy from their Christian profession, ver. 26—37; and,

1.) He reminds them of the severe and inevitable punishments to which apostates are exposed, ver. 26—31.

For if we sin wilfully [1], *after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remaineth* any *sacrifice for sin* [2], *but a certain fearful ex-* 26. 27.

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[1] *If we sin wilfully.*] The author is here speaking, not of every presumptuous sin, but of deliberate apostasy. See ver. 29. Peirce, Macknight, and Seeker *ap.* Newcome.

[2] Any *sacrifice for sin:*] *i. e.* there is no sacrifice by which persons guilty of this offence may be restored to a covenant state. Why not? Because apostasy in such circumstances, when the strongest evidence has been resisted, is a state from which it is morally impossible that a man should recover. Under the

Ch. X. Ver. 27. *pectation of judgement* [1], *and a fiery indignation* [2], *that will devour the adversaries.*

My brethren, above all things beware of apostasy. It has been our privilege to receive the truth in the knowledge of it. We not only admit the gospel doctrine to be true, and receive it as a truth of the highest importance which has ever been communicated to man, but we receive and acknowledge it upon the most cogent evidence, upon evidence which commands our most deliberate assent, and which subdues our most inveterate prejudices. Let us stedfastly adhere to our profession; for wretched

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law sacrifices were instituted for many offences against ceremonial institutions: under the new dispensation all sacrifices are abolished, because the offences which required them are themselves abolished. No such transgressions can exclude from the gospel covenant; but apostasy, wilful deliberate apostasy, does exclude, and no sacrifice remains to restore the offender to his privileges again. The reason is, that it is morally impossible that he should repent. And the writer expresses himself strongly, to deter the timid and unstable Hebrews from apostasy; but he no where says that if they repent they will not be restored. "Suppose," says Dr. Sykes, "a man to sin wilfully, and suppose, too, that there is no sacrifice for sin, because all sacrifices are put down, yet Repentance is left; and God is merciful, and repentance will produce its effect."

[1] *A certain fearful expectation of judgement.*] "a certain frightful, formidable expectation of condemnation, arising from the sense of justice in God, and the fitness of punishment to sin." Sykes. Perhaps arising also from our Lord's predictions of national calamity and desolation which were upon the verge of being accomplished to the uttermost.

[2] *Fiery indignation.*] πυρος ζηλος, "*zeal of fire:* a thorough disposition and resolution to punish most severely the adversaries of Christ." Sykes. "a raging fire." Wakefield. *Which is about to devour* (μελλοντος) *the adversaries:* q. d. The wrath of God, like a consuming fire, is just ready to fall upon the malignant enemies and persecutors of the gospel.

beyond conception will be our lot if we apostatize from it. If it could possibly happen, that after such conviction and such profession as ours we could basely desert the cause of truth, and become open enemies to the faith of Christ, our case were hopeless indeed. No sacrifice remains: no provision is made for the restoration of apostates under such circumstances. Having already resisted the strongest evidence, and overcome the most powerful motives, it is morally impossible that they should be reclaimed. They have nothing more to expect but the vengeance of an insulted God, and to be speedily involved in the approaching inevitable ruin of their hardened and abandoned countrymen. Ch. X. Ver. 27.

Any one who breaketh[3] *the law of Moses*[4] *dieth without mercy, upon* the evidence *of two or three witnesses: of how much severer punishment, think ye, will he be deemed worthy, who trampleth upon*[5] *the son of God, and accounteth the blood of the* 28. 29.

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[3] *Any one who breaketh.*] ἀθετησας. So Wakefield, Sykes. "*sc.* ἐκουσιως. Αθετειν, ὑβριζειν, καταφρονειν. *Hesychius. Qui Mosis legem violat, contemnit.*" Rosenmuller. "The presumptuous offender. Numb. xv. 35." Sykes. The form of expression implies that the Jewish polity still existed.

[4] *Law of Moses.*] Peirce justly observes, that the law of Moses must here be restricted to the ceremonial law, otherwise the argument *a fortiori* would not hold. This is confirmed by a reference to the law itself, Numb. xv. 30, which immediately precedes the account of the man who was stoned to death for gathering sticks on the sabbath-day.

[5] *Trampleth upon.*] This, as Peirce observes, is an expression of scorn, Isa. xxvi. 5, 6, Mal. iv. 3; and of rage, Isa. lxiii. 3, xiv. 25, Dan. viii. 10.

Ch. X. Ver. 29. *covenant, by which he was sanctified*[1], *an unholy thing, and insulteth the spirit of grace*[2].

The law of Moses passes an irreversible sentence of death upon the presumptuous transgressor of its ceremonial precepts, when convicted upon sufficient evidence. How much more severe, then, must be the punishment of the apostate from Christianity, whose offence is so much greater, and the aggravations of it so peculiar; who, having first admitted the claims of Jesus as the Messiah, now rejects him with scorn and rage; who, having once become a party in the Christian covenant, now renounces his concern in it, regards the death of the great federal victim as that of a common malefactor, and disowns all relation to him; and who, having once been convinced of the truth of the Christian doctrine by the miraculous powers of its first teachers, now rejects this divine evidence, and malignantly represents the

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[1] *The blood of the covenant, by which he was sanctified.*] The blood of Christ is the blood of the covenant, not the blood of atonement, but that by which the covenant was ratified; by which he, the apostate, was *sanctified*, that is, ceremonially separated from the unbelieving world, not morally purified. *An unholy thing:* κοινον, a *common* thing. They regarded his death in no other light than that of a common malefactor. See Peirce.

[2] *Insulteth the spirit of grace.*] "shows contempt of the holy spirit gratuitously shed on Christians." Archbishop Newcome. "the mercies of the gospel." Wakefield; who observes, that "Christianity is entitled the *spirit*, in contradiction to the carnal ceremonies of the Jews." Sykes gives a similar interpretation. It is more consistent with the writer's argument to suppose that he refers to spiritual gifts and miraculous powers.

miracles of Jesus and his apostles as the effect of fraud and diabolical agency? Ch. X.

For we know who hath said[3], *Vengeance* belongeth *unto me*[4]; *I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge his people*[5]. It is *a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*[6]. Ver. 30. 31.

Conversant as you are with the writings of Moses, you remember that in his celebrated prophetic song, he introduces God himself as declaring, that it is his prerogative to punish guilt; and to prove that he is

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[3] *We know who hath said,* &c.] This is commonly understood of God: "*quis et quantus.*" Grotius. And Newcome observes, "that there is great dignity in the expression."

[4] *Vengeance belongeth,* &c.] Peirce observes, that the quotation differs both from the Hebrew and the Greek; and he suggests an ingenious criticism, by which to reconcile it to the original. It is cited from Deut. xxxii. 35. The words, *saith the Lord,* are not either in the Hebrew or the LXX.; and in the Epistle they are wanting in the Clermont and some other copies and versions. They are needless, and perhaps spurious. The same text is cited Rom. xii. 19. See Griesbach, Whitby, and Sykes.

[5] *The Lord will judge his people.*] This text almost immediately follows the preceding quotation, Deut. xxxii. 36. It is understood by most expositors in a favourable sense: *q. d.* the Lord shall avenge his people. Mr. Peirce contends, that it is to be taken in the sense of punishing, both here and in the original. There can be no doubt that it is quoted in that sense by this author. Dr. Sykes says, "it is cited only as an evidence that God will certainly take notice of and punish with severity his people that wilfully offend. The general words are to be taken in their general sense; and that is what they are quoted for."

[6] *The living God.*] The prophets who foretold the punishments that should be inflicted upon apostates are dead, but God ever lives to fulfill those threatenings which he authorized them to denounce. "who ever liveth to execute his vengeance." Newcome.

Ch. X. Ver. 31. not there speaking of the heathen only, he adds, a little further on, "The Lord shall judge his people;" by which he declares his firm purpose to punish those who have stood in the nearest relation to him, and have been most highly favoured by him, if they violate their engagements and break his laws. And, from these declarations, we may certainly conclude, that apostates from the Christian faith shall suffer condign punishment. What that punishment will be, it is impossible to conceive or to describe. But of one thing we are assured,—that it will be dreadful and insupportable. And though the prophets of God, who proclaim his judgements, are one after another removed from the land of the living, nevertheless God himself remains from age to age, to fulfill to the utmost, and be assured that he will fully accomplish all that his wisdom and his justice have denounced.

2.) As an antidote to apostasy, the writer urges upon them the recollection of their former zeal, fortitude, and resolution, ver. 32—35.

32. *But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a*
33. *great combat*[1] *of suffering: partly while ye were made a public spectacle*[2] *by reproaches and afflic-*

[1] *A great combat.*] Chrysostom observes, that "he does not say *trials* (πειρασμες), but *combat* (αθλησιν): a word that denotes great praise and commendation." See Peirce.

[2] *Made a public spectacle.*] θεατριζομενοι, "exposed as upon a theatre." Peirce. 1 Cor. iv. 9. Grotius. "to wild beasts and other deaths." Newcome.

tions; and partly, while ye shared with those who were so treated. For indeed ye sympathized with those who were in bonds[3]*: and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods: knowing that ye have for yourselves*[4] *a better and an enduring substance*[5]. *Therefore, cast not away your confidence*[6], *which will receive a great reward.* Ch. X. Ver. 34. 35.

Are any of you now become lukewarm in your attachment to the gospel, and ready to abandon the profession of it? Are you disgusted with its doctrines, ashamed of its reproach, and afraid of suffering for it? Recollect, I beseech you, how differently you thought and felt a few years ago, when the joy-

[3] *Those who were in bonds.*] δεσμιοις. This is the reading of the Alexandrine and Clermont manuscripts, and of the Syriac, Coptic, and Vulgate versions; also of Chrysostom, Theodoret, &c. It is adopted by Griesbach, Peirce, and Newcome. The common reading is, *with me in my bonds*, τοις δεσμοις μου. "Ye had compassion on me in my bonds. Or, ye had compassion upon those who were in chains for Christ." Sykes. "τ. δ. μ. *Effecta esse videtur hæc lectio a librariis, qui hoc etiam argumento confirmare voluerunt Pauli esse hanc epistolam.*" Rosenmuller.

[4] *For yourselves.*] εχειν ἑαυτοις. The best authorities omit εν before ἑαυτοις. Griesbach, Newcome. Mr. Hallett, the learned continuator of Mr. Peirce's *Commentary*, which was broken off by death while he was examining this text, upon the authority of the Alexandrine and other manuscripts and versions, reads ἑαυτες, "knowing that ye yourselves have," &c.

[5] *Enduring substance.*] The received text adds εν ουρανοις, *in heaven*; which words are wanting in the Alexandrine and Clermont manuscripts, and the Æthiopic, Vulgate, and Italic versions. See Griesbach and Wakefield.

[6] *Your confidence.*] παρρησια properly signifies courage and resolution in professing truth. Mark viii. 32, John vii. 26, Acts iv. 13, 29, 31. Hallett, Grotius. "Hold fast that liberty, that freedom of access which is granted to you to enter the holy of holies." Sykes.

Ch. X. Ver. 35.

ful tidings were first proclaimed. Recollect how irresistible was the evidence of these glorious facts: how strong the conviction which it carried to your mind, how it dispelled the darkness of your understanding, triumphed over the most inveterate prejudice, and satisfied you completely as to the wisdom of the Christian scheme, its correspondence with the prophecies, and its harmony with all preceding dispensations. Think how soon you were called out to suffer for this profession, when Stephen was stoned, when James was beheaded, when Peter was imprisoned, when enraged persecutors breathed out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. Recollect the firmness and fortitude with which you bore the severe conflict: some of you being publicly exposed to insults, and severe corporal punishment, as though you were the worst of malefactors, and others being compelled to be the wretched spectators of torments inflicted upon persons dearer to them than themselves; and whom they would willingly have redeemed by suffering in their place. For indeed you sympathized tenderly with those who suffered bonds and imprisonment for Christ and his religion, and endured heroically the loss of all things, relying with joyful confidence on the mercy of God and the promises of the gospel: and assured of ample recompense both here and hereafter, in present peace, in triumphant hope, and in a resurrection to eternal life and happiness. Having set out in your career with these just and animating views, and with this undaunted vigour

and resolution, let me entreat you to persevere, and do not, now that the conflict is almost closed, and victory is at hand, disgrace your character, dishonour your profession, and endanger your immortal interests, by deserting the cause, by casting away your armour, and in a cowardly manner quitting the field. I conjure you to keep up your courage, and maintain the struggle a little longer, and then your success is certain, and your reward will be glorious. Ch. X. Ver. 35.

It would be inexcusable not to remark upon the irresistible evidence arising from the facts stated by this writer, in favour of the truth and divine authority of the Christian religion. These Hebrew Christians, to whom the epistle is addressed, were contemporaries with Christ and his apostles, and lived in the very place where he taught his doctrine, performed his miracles, suffered crucifixion, and was raised from the dead; and where the gifts and powers of the holy spirit were first, and most abundantly and publicly communicated. They had the best opportunities of inquiring into the truth of these facts, and were prompted by the most cogent motives. They could not be deceived: and so well were they satisfied as to the truth of them, that they yielded up their most cherished and deeply rooted prejudices, and submitted to the most cruel persecutions for the profession of a doctrine entirely founded upon them. These facts therefore must be unquestionable, and the Christian doctrine must be true and divine.

Ch. X. Ver. 35. 3.) The shortness of the time in which their patience would continue to be exercised is suggested as an additional argument for persevering fortitude, ver. 36, 37.

36. *For ye have need of patience, that when ye have done the will of God ye may receive the promise*[1].

37. *For yet a very little while indeed,* and *he that is to come*[2] *will come, and will not delay.*

I will not deceive you by representing the profession of Christianity in your circumstances as a safe or an easy thing. Believers in Jesus, in the land of Judea, in its present state, must expect still to suffer cruelty and indignity, and still to sympa-

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[1] *To receive the promise*] "is, to receive the accomplishment of the promise. Luke xxiv. 49, Acts vii. 17, i. -, Gal. iii. 14." Hallett.

[2] *He that is to come.*] Mr. Hallett thinks that the original expression in the prophet Habakkuk ii. 3, should be rendered *it:* i. e. the vision will surely come; and that this version best suits the design of the writer in this quotation. *q. d.* that blessing tendered in the promise of the new covenant will come, &c. But it appears more probable that the writer here alludes to the escape of the Christians at the destruction of Jerusalem: which had been promised by Christ, and which was fulfilled remarkably at that dangerous and critical season: see ver. 25, also ch. viii. 13. See Whitby's note. "The apostle," [the writer of the epistle,] says Dr. Sykes, "had plainly the words of the prophet Habakkuk in view, ch. ii. 3, 4. But yet, as he has not so much as hinted at any thing as written in the prophet, nor said whose sentiment he used, we are not to understand him as appealing to a prophecy, but only as applying the prophet's words to his own purpose. The Hebrews were to wait with patience and perseverance, that they might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. They were to hold out yet for some time, be it more or less; and he that is to come will come, and will not delay his coming beyond the time appointed."—"*Non probandi causa Paulus hæc verba affert, sed utitur prophetæ verbis ad suos animi sensus exprimendos.*" Rosenmuller.

thize with Christian sufferers. You must arm yourselves with patience, you must persevere in obedience, you must submit to persecution: if you fall back, you will forfeit all your hopes: but if you persevere, you shall not be disappointed: God will be faithful to his promise: and be assured, for your encouragement, that the remaining season of trial will be very short. For, to allude to the declaration of the prophet Habakkuk, in a very short time indeed, much shorter than either you or your enemies and persecutors may apprehend, He, who has declared that he is about to appear, to the confusion of his enemies, and for the succour and avenging of his friends, will indeed fulfill his awful declaration. And by the instrumentality of the Roman power, though he may not personally appear upon the occasion, he will inflict signal vengeance upon his enemies and yours, from which all those who believe his gospel and regard his admonitions shall be happily exempted. Ch. X. Ver. 37.

There can be little doubt that the writer here alludes to the approaching destruction of the city and the temple, in which dreadful catastrophe myriads of the unbelieving Jews perished, while the great body of Christians, warned by the declarations of Jesus, escaped in time from the desolating storm.

SECTION II.

Ch. X. *THE WRITER, after having explained the nature of faith, illustrates its excellence by the examples of those worthies whose history is recorded in the Old Testament.* Ch. x. 38—xi. 40.

1. He reminds the believing Hebrews that perseverance is the only means of ensuring the reward of faith, ver. 38, 39.

Ver. 38. *Now the just by faith shall live*[1]*: yet if he draw back,* God saith *I will have*[2] *no complacency in*

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[1] *The just by faith.*] This is a quotation from, or rather an allusion to, Habak. ii. 4, in the Greek version; which in this case differs from the Hebrew, though it agrees with the Arabic. There are, however, two manuscripts which countenance the LXX. and Arabic versions, which Hallett and others think was the original reading. "The meaning of the prophet," says Archbishop Newcome in his note on the original, is, "the good or righteous man who believes in my prophets and obeys their directions, shall live at the time of the Babylonish invasion. See Jer. xxi. 9, xxxviii. 2, 17, 18. In the New Testament the words are accommodated." This observation is perfectly just; and in the instance before us, it is applied by the writer of the epistle to the escape of the believing Hebrews, who took warning from the prophecies of Jesus, from the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans: by their faith they saved their lives. The clauses are transposed. Archbishop Newcome's version from the Hebrew is, "Behold! his soul is lifted up, it is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." The LXX. reads, "If he draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him; but the just shall live by faith."

[2] *I will have.*] Gr. "my soul will have," &c. See Newcome. This is one instance among innumerable others to prove, that

him. But we are not of those who draw back to destruction, but of those who have faith to their own deliverance[3].

Ch. X. Ver. 39.

I have been reminding you, that in a very short time that desolating calamity will take place which Jesus foretold immediately before his crucifixion. If you are sincere believers in Jesus, you shall escape from the unparalleled miseries of that awful crisis. For, as the prophet Habakkuk observes upon a similar occasion, "He that is just by faith shall live," so I now assure you, that if you believe the doctrine and the declarations of Jesus Christ, and avow yourselves his disciples, and, warned by his predictions, provide for your escape, you shall live through the approaching storm. But on the other hand, if you desert your principles and abandon your profession, your conduct will be highly displeasing to God, and you will suffer as your forefathers did, and as your unbelieving countrymen will do, the just consequences of your folly and guilt. But I trust, my Christian friends, that we shall all act a wiser part: I trust that we shall not be found in the wretched number of those who, by apostatizing from

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the *soul* does not signify a separate immaterial substance, but a person's self. No one will maintain that God has a separable soul.

[3] *To their own deliverance.*] εις περιποιησιν ψυχης, *to the deliverance of the soul:* or, as Mr. Wakefield translates, *of our lives.* Alluding to the escape of the believing Hebrews from the approaching calamities of their country. "to the saving of the soul." Newcome, and the generality of commentators. An excellent and most important sense certainly; but not so agreeable to the context.

Ch. X. Ver. 39. our profession, shall perish with our countrymen, but that we shall persevere in giving credit to the declarations of Jesus, and thus provide for our safety in the general ruin.

2. The writer defines that faith which was the operative principle in the eminent characters recorded in the Old Testament. Ch. xi. 1, 2.

Ch. XI. Ver. 1. *Now faith is the confident expectation*[1] *of things hoped for, the firm conviction*[2] *of things not seen.*

2. *For by it the ancients obtained an honourable testimony*[3].

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[1] *Now faith is the confident expectation.*] ὑποστασις, "which we translate *substance*, is properly the basis or foundation, or groundwork, upon which any thing is built; and it is plain that such things as we hope for, must have some ground or reason, or else we should hope without reason; which would be nothing less than folly. Faith in the promise of God is the foundation of our hope of future happiness." Sykes. "Faith," says Hallett, "is such a firm persuasion as gives, as it were, a substance, or present existence, to the good things we hope for." He observes, that "the word ὑποστασις is here used in its most natural and usual sense;" and adds, that "this sense is confirmed by the Syriac version." "Now faith is a persuasion concerning those things that are in hope, as if they did actually exist." Chrysostom's comment is: "Things that are only hoped for seem to have no ὑποστασις, *subsistence*, but faith gives them a subsistence, or *being*." Newcome observes, that "the word *faith* is elegantly taken up from ch. x. 39."

[2] *The conviction.*] ελεγχος. Hallett remarks, that "the original word properly signifies a demonstration, or such kind of argument as both convinces the understanding, and engages a man to act according to that conviction." "The object of faith," says Newcome, "is either το ελπιζομενον, as the happiness of a future state, or το μη βλεπομενον, as that God made the world."

[3] *The ancients obtained an honourable testimony,*] which they would not have done if their faith had been a mere speculative

If you want to know what that faith is which will afford you security in the season of danger, and will ensure deliverance here and hereafter, I must inform you that it is not a mere speculative assent to truth, but a living practical principle. It lies at the foundation of Christian hope: it is an unhesitating assent to the promise of God through Christ: it is such an assured conviction of the truth and reality of the facts related, as shall induce you to act as if you had yourselves been present with them, and eye witnesses of them. This is the faith which will guide and govern the feelings and the conduct as powerfully as the immediate impressions of sense: and it was by such a faith as this that those holy men, whose histories are recorded in the Hebrew scriptures, obtained that high reputation in which they were held by their contemporaries and by posterity, and performed those extraordinary actions of which God himself was pleased to testify his approbation. Ch. XI. Ver. 2.

3. By faith we learn that the moral dispensations of God to mankind have a supernatural origin, ver. 3.

By faith[4] *we understand that the ages*[5] *were* 3.

assent. "By the term πρεσβυτεροι," says Bishop Barrington, "in this passage is evidently meant, the ancestors of the Hebrews. This and some other texts in which the term occurs, induce me to be of opinion, that πρεσβυτερος in the New Testament frequently signifies, not an office, but a character of age, of standing in the Christian church, and particularly the first fruits of conversion to the gospel, in a nation, province, or congregation."

[4] *By faith*:] that is, in the history of the divine dispensations

Ch. XI. Ver. 3. *arranged by the power of God, that so what is* now *seen* [1] *did not arise from* things *which* before *appeared.*

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recorded in the scriptures.—It is from them we learn that God revealed his word to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, &c. So that the revolutions in the moral state of things which then took place were not the result of any peculiar wisdom in Abraham, or Moses, but of an immediate divine interposition and command.

[5] *The ages.*] τους αιωνας. "This word," says Archbishop Newcome, and most interpreters with him, "is explained in the following clause by the *things that are seen;* so that it must be understood of the visible material world, called into being by the word or command of God." See Gen. i. 1. "Reason," says Hallett, "could not discover that God spake the word, gave the command, and that hereupon the creatures came into being." He observes that "the *word* here spoken of is not the divine Logos, but God's word of command (ῥημα), which ordered the creatures into being."

Dr. Sykes, however, understands the word αιωνες to signify *ages,* or certain periodical revolutions of time: 1. from Adam to the flood; 2. the patriarchal age to the law; 3. the age of the law to Christ. He renders the clause, "By faith we understand that the ages were adapted or fitted by the word of God; *i. e.* by his command or direction suited to their proper ends." He even says, note on Heb. i. 2: "There is not any one instance in the New Testament in which more than this seems to be meant by the word αιων." Mr. Wakefield adopts the same interpretation, and renders the text, "by faith we understand that the ages were so ordered by divine power, that the present state of things arose not from what did *then* appear."

[1] *That so what is,* &c.] εις το μη κ. τ. λ. "so that things which are seen," &c. Public Version. "This," says Hallett, "is certainly a wrong translation. Εις το can never signify *so that;* but must be rendered *that so, to the end that,* or the like. See Eph. i. 12, 1 Cor. x. 6. *q. d.* to the end that the things which are seen may not *seem, or be thought to* have been made of things that do appear. That they may not be thought to have been made of some pre-existent matter: to prevent any suspicion of this, he assures us that God made them by his mere word of command." If αιωνας is translated *ages,* the meaning seems to be, that the several dispensations were introduced, not by natural means, but by an immediate divine interposition.

The first object of faith is, that God governs the world; and that he has from time to time interfered in an extraordinary and supernatural manner for the moral instruction and improvement of his human offspring. The scriptures teach us that he first gave to Adam, and afterwards to Noah, a law for the government of all their posterity. Afterwards, when mankind degenerated into idolatry and vice, he called Abraham out of his idolatrous state, and made a covenant with him and his posterity. In a succeeding age he delivered the law to Moses from Mount Sinai: and latterly he has spoken to us by Jesus Christ, by whom he has entered with us who believe, into a new and better covenant. These interpositions of his mercy he has revealed us, to the end that we might not imagine that these revolutions in the moral circumstances of mankind were mere natural or casual events, brought to pass by human power and wisdom: but that we might know and acknowledge them in their successive order to have been introduced by the immediate interposition, the power and goodness of the great Author of nature and parent of mankind, that we might admire his wisdom in all his dispensations, and might rejoice and be thankful that our happy lot is cast under the reign of the Messiah. Ch. XI. Ver. 3.

4. The writer illustrates the excellence of faith by the examples of many eminent persons whose histories are related in the Jewish scriptures, ver. 4—40.

CH. XI. 1.) The excellency of faith is exemplified in the conduct of Abel, ver. 4.

VER. 4. *By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained testimony that he was righteous, God bearing witness to his offering; and through this, though dead, he still speaketh.*

I shall now proceed to illustrate the excellence of faith, by calling to your remembrance some eminent examples of its powerful and beneficial influence contained in your sacred history, which may both explain my doctrine and excite your emulation.

And let me, first, remind you of the faith of Abel, whose sad history is related in the book of Genesis, where it is recorded that both he and his brother Cain brought their offerings to Jehovah, each of them from the produce of his respective occupation. Cain, who was a cultivator of the land, brought a present of the fruit of the ground; and Abel, who was a shepherd, offered the choicest of the lambs of his flock. The outward act was similar in both. In each, by an appropriate gift, gratitude was apparently expressed to the sovereign benefactor. But the eye of God penetrates the heart; and he saw that where the external acts were similar the inward temper was widely different. The history tells us that Jehovah testified approbation to Abel and his offering, but the contrary to Cain and his offering. In what manner he manifested this approbation and disapprobation we know not; for the history is si-

lent, and conjecture is vain. But the foundation of it was the different character of the different men. Abel entertained just apprehensions of God, his faith was practical, his heart was right, and therefore his sacrifice was accepted: while that of Cain, whose faith had no influence upon his conduct, and who was in his heart malignant and envious, a liar and a murderer, was for this reason justly rejected. And the important lesson which the sacrifice of Abel teaches us to this day is this, that a firm and practical faith is the only principle of acceptable worship [1]. Ch. XI. Ver. 4.

2.) The faith of Enoch is next celebrated, ver. 5, 6.

By faith Enoch was translated, so that he saw not death, and was no more found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he obtained this testimony, that he pleased God. 5. *Now without faith* it is *impossible to please* him: *for he who cometh to God must believe that he exists, and is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him.* 6.

If we pass on a little further in the history, we shall meet with another memorable example of the

[1] *Acceptable worship.*] This appears to me to be the just and obvious meaning of the passage. As to all the inferences which have been drawn from the story of Abel concerning the divine appointment of animal sacrifices, the necessity of a propitiatory offering, Abel's faith in the atonement of Christ, and the like, they are to the last degree precarious, and seem to originate wholly in the fond partiality of men to their own mysterious and unscriptural notions, without the least foundation in the narrative.

Ch. XI. Ver. 6. excellence and efficacy of faith in the antediluvian patriarch Enoch, of whom it is related, Gen. v. 24, *that he walked with God, and he was not to be found, because God took him.* Now, if we attentively consider the circumstances of the narration, we shall see that this great distinction of exemption from death was owing to the firmness and the practical influence of the patriarch's faith. He walked with God, that is, he conversed with his Maker in acts of devotion, and habitually lived under an impressive sense of the divine presence, and a solicitous concern to approve himself in the sight of God. And this character which is given of Enoch in the history necessarily implies that he was acceptable to God: of which God was pleased to give this signal proof, that he translated him from a mortal to an immortal state in the midst of life, before he had finished half the time usually allotted to man at that period; and miraculously exempted him from the stroke of death: thus exhibiting to the antediluvian world, which was then beginning to be very degenerate, a signal proof of his moral government, and of the future expectations of man. But this excellence of character in Enoch was unquestionably the result of a vigorous faith: for he could not have been that humble, dutiful, and habitual worshiper of God, that fearless professor of religion, in a depraved and degenerate age, if he had not been a firm believer both in the existence and moral government of God. For the worship and service of God necessarily supposes a previous persuasion that

there is an original all-perfect Being, who approves of virtue, and who will not suffer real integrity to go without its just reward [1]. Ch. XI. Ver. 6.

3.) He celebrates the faith of Noah, ver. 7.

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[1] *Just reward.*] The writer assumes the truth of the narration in the book of Genesis, and, admitting the facts, his conclusions are just. Nevertheless, as the inspiration of the writer of that book is no where asserted, and as the sources of his information are of doubtful authority, I do not know that we are obliged to admit the truth of the facts without hesitation. In the present instance there appears to me sufficient reason for suspending assent. When Jesus was transfigured, Moses and Elijah appeared to him and conversed with him. Had Enoch been translated, as they probably were, it is reasonable to believe that he also would have appeared with them. Upon this subject, however, we are not very competent to judge, and must be content to leave the history in the same obscurity in which we find it.

It appears to me certain, from the appearance of Moses at the mount of transfiguration, Luke ix. 30, 31, that Moses did not die: and it seems very probable that the same two persons who were seen at the mount of transfiguration to converse with Jesus concerning his approaching sufferings, afterwards appeared at his tomb, Luke xxiv. 4, to announce his resurrection, and again at the Mount of Olives, Acts i. 10, 11, when our Lord ascended to announce his future visible and glorious return. It is some confirmation of this hypothesis, that the two persons who appeared upon these occasions are expressly called *ανδρες, men.*

"It were much to be wished," says Dr. Priestley, "but it is to no purpose, that we knew something more of what preceded the translation of Enoch. So great an event, and the first of its kind, had no doubt some very important cause. It is possible, but this we can only conjecture, that Enoch might have been authorized to teach the doctrine of a future life, and that, as a proof of its reality, he might be removed into it without dying, since his translation would be a miracle better adapted to confirm his doctrine than any other that should have had no relation to such a state." Dr. Priestley supposes that the doctrine of a future life, which is the great object of the whole scheme of

Ch. XI. Ver. 7. *By faith Noah having been warned by God*[1] *concerning things not then seen, moved with pious reverence*[2], *prepared an ark for the preservation of his family; by which he condemned the world*[3], *and became heir of the justification*[4] *which is by faith.*

The next remarkable instance of the excellence and efficacy of practical faith is that of Noah, one of the descendants of Enoch, of whose history we read in Gen. vi., and of whom the same character is given as of his pious ancestor, ver. 9, "He was a just man and perfect in his generation, and he walked with God." This character he bore in times still more degenerate and depraved than those of Enoch, and when the whole human race had be-

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revelation, must have been communicated to mankind in some period prior to the law of Moses. He conjectures that "it was communicated to Adam himself, and that it was further confirmed to Enoch;" and observes, that "the translation of Enoch and Elijah was not calculated to give mankind any idea of a state of happiness without the body, but the contrary."

[1] *Warned by God.*] χρηματισθεις, upon warning from heaven. "*Propriè, circa aliquam rem explicandam, vel constituendam, vel efficiendam versor —— oraculum divinum edo, divinitus admoneo.*" Schleusner.

[2] *Moved with pious reverence*] "and just regard to God." See ch. xii. 28. Sykes. "ευλαβηθεις, *pie ac religiose oraculum Dei colens.*" Rosenmuller.

[3] *Condemned the world.*] "He condemned the world of incredulity by his faith, which was well grounded and sufficiently attested." Sykes.

[4] *The justification.*] "obtained the deliverance." Sykes. "according to his faith." Wakefield. "Noah became entitled to those good things, which are promised to such whose faith in God makes them act from a hearty desire of pleasing him, however imperfect such acts may be." Sykes.

come so corrupt and abominable, that God, their creator, is said to have "repented that he had made man upon the earth," ver. 6, and he determined to destroy the whole race of human beings by a deluge, with the single exception of Noah and his family. Of this event he gave a direct warning to Noah, and ordered him to prepare an ark for his escape: and though there was no appearance which would lead to the expectation of so terrible a catastrophe; though every thing went on in its usual course for months and years after the warning had been given; though his profligate and abandoned contemporaries treated his solemn admonitions and exhortations with contempt, and no doubt ridiculed him as a dotard and a madman for the preparation he was making to escape from a calamity of which they had no apprehension; yet this holy patriarch, relying with unwavering confidence upon the truth of the divine declarations, and firmly convinced that the threatened catastrophe would assuredly take place at the appointed season, built the ark, agreeably to the divine direction, for the preservation of himself and his family, and the various species of terrestrial animals.—Thus did the vigour of his faith, and the wisdom of his correspondent conduct, illustrate and more distinctly exhibit the folly and the guilt of the unbelieving world, and the justice of their subsequent condemnation. And thus by faith he obtained the privilege of deliverance from that dreadful catastrophe which was justly inflicted upon his deluded and profligate contemporaries. Ch. XI. Ver. 7.

Ch. XI. 4.) He exemplifies the efficacy and success of faith in the case of Abraham and Sarah, ver. 8—16.

(1.) The first memorable instance of the faith of Abraham was, his migration by divine direction from his native country to the land of Canaan, ver. 8—10.

Ver. 8. *By faith Abraham, being called to depart for that place which he was afterwards to receive as an inheritance, obeyed; and departed, though he knew not whither he was going.*

Abraham, the founder of our nation, was originally a native of Chaldea and an idolater. He became a worshiper of the true God; and being exposed to persecution in his native country, he received a divine command to leave it and to go to the land of Canaan: a country to which he was an utter stranger, but in which God promised to bless and prosper him, and in due time to give it to his posterity, who should multiply so as to become a great nation. This eminent patriarch having certain evidence, such as God can easily communicate, that the suggestion was of divine origin, and not the conceit of a wild imagination, placed entire confidence in the divine declaration, and with all his family and all his property he set out for this unknown country: as it is related in the Mosaic history, Gen. xii. 1—5.

9. *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as* in *a foreign* country, *dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, co-heirs* with him *of the same promise.*

It appears from the history (Gen. xii. 6, &c.),

that soon after Abraham's arrival in Canaan, God appeared to him and made a solemn promise to him that to his seed he would give the land. Relying upon this promise, the patriarch remained, and passed his life there with his wife and family, with Isaac his son, and Jacob his grandson; in whose line the promise was continued and renewed. These eminent persons, however, never possessed any permanent property in the country, but resided in tents, moving from place to place as occasion required, with their wives and children, their servants and their cattle. Ch. XI. Ver. 9.

For he expected that city which hath foundations, whose framer and builder is *God.* 10.

And indeed we are not to suppose that the promise of the future prosperity and grandeur of his family was the only motive to Abraham's conduct, and the only foundation of his hope. Though we are not informed that the doctrine of a future life was expressly revealed to him, there can be no doubt that he lived in expectation of it, and that he reconciled his mind to the many inconveniencies of a wandering and unsettled state, by the prospect of admission into that glorious city which God himself has founded for the future everlasting residence of the righteous, and in comparison with which the firmest of terrestrial edifices are perishing and transitory things.

(2.) Both Abraham and Sarah manifested an ex-

Ch. XI. emplary faith in the divine promise concerning the birth of Isaac, ver. 11, 12.

Ver. 11. *By faith Sarah*[1] *herself also received strength to conceive*[2], *even when she was past age, because she judged him who had made the promise faithful.*

12. *So that there descended, even from one, and him too become* as *dead*[3], a posterity, *in multitude as the stars of heaven, and innumerable as the sand upon the sea shore.*

Sarah was ninety, and Abraham a hundred years of age, when the promise was made that they should have a son to whom the promise should descend, and in whose posterity it should be fulfilled. Improbable as this event was in itself, yet as soon as they were convinced that the promise was truly divine they yielded their full assent to it, and, as a reward of their faith, the promise was fulfilled in its utmost extent, in the birth of Isaac and the unparalleled increase and prosperity of his descendants in succeeding generations.

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[1] *By faith Sarah.*] Sarah did not at first believe (Gen. xviii. 13, 14); but, no doubt, when she was convinced that the promise was divine, she gave credit to it. "Her laughter was an indication, not of unbelief, but that she was greatly pleased. So Abraham laughed Gen. xvii. 6." Sykes. But the learned writer forgets that Sarah was reproved for her laughter and doubting.

[2] *To conceive.*] The received text adds ετεκεν, *was delivered;* but this word is wanting in the Alexandrine, Clermont, and other manuscripts, and is omitted by Griesbach and Newcome.

[3] *Become* as *dead.*] How, then, came Abraham after this to have children by Keturah? Gen. xxv. 1. Mr. Hallett concludes that Keturah was a concubine of Abraham before he left Chaldea: which is, indeed, not improbable.

(3.) The author digresses to observe that the main object of the faith of the ancient patriarchs was the happiness of a future life, ver. 13—16. Ch. XI.

All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off[4], *and having hailed* them[5], *they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the land*[6]. Ver. 13.

These holy descendants of Abraham, to whom the promise that the land of Canaan should be given to their posterity was repeatedly renewed, passed their lives in cheerful dependence on the divine declaration, though they did not, and indeed could not, reasonably expect to live to see the performance of it. But entertaining no doubt of the accomplishment of the promise at the appointed season, they triumphed in the glorious though distant prospect, and reconciled themselves to present temporary inconveniencies, by the assured expectation of the future glory and felicity of their descendants.

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[4] *Seen them afar off.*] The received text adds, *και πεισθεντες, were persuaded of them:* which words are wanting in the Alexandrine and other manuscripts, and in the Syriac, Æthiopic, and other versions, and are left out of the text by Griesbach and Newcome.

[5] *Having hailed* them.] "having with joy saluted them at a distance: a fine image." Newcome.

[6] *Confessed that they were strangers.*] "Who died in faith? The answer is, Not only Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, but all their descendants to the days of Moses. Yet, notwithstanding the promise, none of them received that land; but were fully persuaded that the promise would some time or other be made good. Abraham owned himself a stranger, Gen. xxiii. 4, to the sons of Heth. Jacob calls his whole life a pilgrimage, Gen. xlvii. 9." Sykes.

Ch. XI. Ver. 13. In the mean time they thought and spoke of themselves as strangers and sojourners in the land of Canaan, and in this world in general: thus the venerable patriarch, when introduced to Pharaoh, speaks of the days of the years of his own life, and of the lives of his pious ancestors, as the season of his and their pilgrimage. Gen. xlvii. 9.

14. *Now they who speak thus show plainly that they*
15. *are seeking for* their native *country*[1]. *And if indeed they had meaned that which they had left, they might have found an opportunity of returning*
16. thither. *But they were earnestly desirous of a better, that is, a heavenly* country[2]. *Therefore God is not ashamed to call himself their God*[3], *because he hath prepared for them a city.*

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[1] *That they are seeking for* their native *country.*] πατριδα. So Wakefield. See Newcome's margin. "Whilst they declare they seek a country, it is plain they have not a country. Abraham was in Canaan, Jacob in Egypt, where they called themselves strangers. If they meant that they had a home, a place where they had a right to be, they had time: they might have returned. But in truth they thought of a full possession of their own, where the promise of God was to be made good." Sykes.

[2] *A heavenly* country.] "They knew that God cannot lye nor deceive; and yet Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, notwithstanding the particular promises made to them, received nothing that could be called a reward. They had not any possession in Canaan; no, not a place to set their foot on, Acts vii. 5. Could any thing then be more natural, than to turn their thoughts upon some place very different from the place they lived in? and therefore they expected and desired a heavenly city, a place of sure reward." Sykes.

[3] *Is not ashamed to call himself their God.*] "But he would have been ashamed, humanly speaking, if he had not provided for them an abiding city, an everlasting life." Newcome.—"Ουκ επαισχυνεται αυτος, *wherefore God does not make them ashamed,*

The great object of the faith and hope of our pious ancestors was not solely the glory of their posterity, but a future happy and immortal existence to themselves. And their faith was similar to ours, though it was not founded in that clear and distinct revelation which God hath vouchsafed to us. The proof of this fact lies in narrow compass. They professed themselves sojourners and pilgrims in the country where they dwelt. They sought therefore and were anxious to go home to their true country: not indeed to Chaldea, from whence they came, for had that been their purpose and their wish, they might easily have found means of returning thither. The country, therefore, to which they looked must have been a far better region than Canaan or Chaldea. The object of their intense desire, and pursuit, was that celestial country where their God and Father dwells and reigns, and where they hoped to live in happiness and glory to endless ages. Ch. XI. Ver. 16.

Nor was this hope without just foundation: for, though the doctrine of a future life be not the main object of the Mosaic dispensation, and is no where explicitly revealed in it, yet there are many oblique intimations of it for the encouragement and consolation of suffering virtue. Amongst other arguments, one of the most convincing and affecting is, that God solemnly announces himself as the God

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in being called their God. Had they absolutely had no reward, it would have been matter of shame and folly in them to have called God their God." Sykes.

Ch. XI. Ver. 16. of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and of their posterity, and that even after these patriarchs had been long in their graves. But this high and endearing relation he would have thought it a disgrace to have owned, had he not intended something better for them than what they actually possessed during their pilgrimage through life. But because he has provided a state of pure and perfect and everlasting happiness for them, he therefore glories in the character and title of their God, being fully resolved to fulfill in their utmost extent all the engagements and the claims of this high and honourable relation.

The persons of whom the author speaks must be the descendants of Abraham previously to their being reduced to a state of bondage in Egypt; for after that time it was not in their power, had they been ever so much disposed to it, to have returned to Chaldea. The argument he uses is exactly parallel to that which our Lord states, Luke xx. 37, 38, to convince the Sadducees of the doctrine of the resurrection. The justice of it cannot be questioned; but how far the patriarchs could see the force of this reasoning may perhaps be doubted. Upon the whole, however, though the object of the Mosaic dispensation was to teach the Unity of God, and not the doctrine of a future life, it can hardly be supposed that these virtuous patriarchs would be left in total ignorance of a doctrine so necessary to their moral improvement, their encouragement and their consolation.

(4.) The writer proceeds to illustrate the faith of Abraham in his obedience to the command to offer up Isaac, ver. 17—19. Ch. XI.

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac[1]; *and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son*[2]; even he *to whom* Ver. 17. 18.

[1] *Offered up Isaac.*] I quite agree with Hallett, that God had as perfect a right to take away the life of Isaac as a victim upon the altar as by a common disease, or any other means; also, that God had an unquestionable right to put the faith of his father to the severe trial of requiring him to officiate as the priest upon the occasion: I am also ready to admit that Abraham, having clearly ascertained that it was a divine command, was not only perfectly innocent but highly meritorious in his ready obedience to a precept so harsh and painful; and finally, that a case so extraordinary as this would give no encouragement to human sacrifices, and could not reasonably be pleaded as a precedent for this purpose; and that it served in its peculiar circumstances as a memorable example of faith and submission to the will of God in this venerable patriarch. Still, however, it is an idea so improbable, so revolting, so unlike any thing and every thing in the divine character and dispensations, that a father should be required to sacrifice his own son upon the altar, that notwithstanding the testimony of the book of Genesis, appealed to as it is by the author of this epistle, whose authority, however, is of little value, I must acknowledge that I feel great doubt as to the reality of the fact. It is possible that the historian may only mean to relate a visionary scene; as it is generally allowed that some scenes are such which are described in the prophets as historic facts. Or, possibly, it may be a figurative way of representing that the life of Isaac, the heir of the promise, had by some means or other been exposed to extreme danger, in a situation in which the father had shown great fortitude, and an unwavering confidence in the divine promise.

[2] *His only-begotten son.*] μονογενη· not literally an only son: Abraham had Ishmael by Hagar, and others by Keturah. But Isaac was his only son by Sarah, or the only heir of the promise: having been himself the object of a promise, and through whom the promises were to descend: the best beloved son. By the evangelist John, and by him alone, the epithet is applied to Christ; not as indicating any mysterious generation from the

Ch. XI. Ver. 19. *it had been declared*[1], *In Isaac thy posterity shall be called*[2]: *reasoning with himself*[3] *that God* was *able even to raise* him *from the dead, whence he had also, comparatively speaking, received him*[4].

Father, for then, why should it not have been used by the other sacred writers? but merely as synonymous to *beloved, chosen*, &c. See John i. 14, 18, iii. 16, 18, 1 John iv. 9. See Schleusner.

[1] Even he *to whom.*] προς ὁν. So Newcome. "*Cui promissum erat, ex Isaaco habebis posteritatem.*" Rosenmuller. "that only son *of whom* it had been declared," &c. Wakefield and others.

[2] *In Isaac shall thy posterity be called.*] "*ex Isaaco habebis posteritatem*, Gen. xxi. 12. κληθηναι, *esse; verba enim nominalia sæpe sunt realia.*" Rosenmuller. "That is, that the posterity of Isaac should be accounted the seed of Abraham, and be made God's peculiar people." Hallett. "Thy posterity will be derived from Isaac." Wakefield.

[3] *Reasoning with himself.*] λογισαμενος. So Wakefield. "Abraham knew that the promise was made, and he knew who it was that had made it, and therefore he had no doubt that it would be made good." Sykes.

[4] *From whence he also, comparatively speaking, received him.*] "εν παραβολη, in a parenthesis (*ut ita dicam*). The English expression (comparatively speaking) answers to the Greek." Markland, Bowyer. "In a manner: *similitudine quadam.* By Isaac's miraculous birth, Abraham had, as it were, received him from the dead." Newcome. "And indeed from a like condition he at first received him." Wakefield. "Sarah was, as to her having children, comparatively speaking, dead before Isaac was conceived. If God, therefore, gave him at first in an extraordinary manner, he might, in order to make good his word, restore him in some extraordinary manner." Sykes. "This interpretation of Isaac's being born after Abraham was reckoned dead (says Hallett) cannot be right: the apostle does not speak of Abraham's being dead, but of Isaac's being dead and then raised. Also, Abraham's receiving Isaac from the dead is plainly subsequent to his offering him up. Isaac, then, was raised, and in a figure: not in a literal sense, inasmuch as he was not actually put to death. But here was, as it were, a resurrection, or the figure of a resurrection. In the same figurative sense Abraham is said to have offered him up." "παραβολη, *discrimen, præsentissimum vitæ periculum, a* παραβαλλεσθαι, *quod interdum est periculo se objicere, et exponere. Vid. Suid. et Hesych.* Heb.

Ch. XI. Ver. 19.

It is related of our pious ancestor Abraham, Gen. xxii., that his faith in the promises was put to a very extraordinary trial. He was required to offer up his son Isaac as a burnt offering to God upon Mount Moriah. And having the most undoubted evidence that this was a divine requisition, without any hesitation he obeyed the terrible injunction: he took his son to the appointed spot, he built the altar, he laid the wood, and he bound the victim: and this virtuous parent, to whom so many promises had been made of a numerous and flourishing posterity, was just about to plunge the fatal knife into the bosom of this darling son, the only child of his mother, the child of promise, the very person who had been marked out as the chosen seed with whom the covenant was made, and to whose descendants the promise was limited, Gen. xxi. 12, had not the deadly stroke been averted by a supernatural interposition at the very instant when it was about to have been given. Such was the strength of Abraham's faith, that he firmly believed that all

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Heb. xi. 19, *ubi Abrahamus filium suum vivum recepisse dicitur* ἐν παραβολῇ· h. e. *in ipso præsentissimo vitæ periculo, seu, quod eodem redit præter omnem spem et expectationem.*" Schleusner.

"If Abraham had not had the firmest faith in the power of God to raise Isaac from the dead, he would not have shown his faith," says Dr. Priestley, "by the sacrifice of his son: a thing to which he must have had the greatest possible reluctance, and he did it without any reluctance or hesitation that appears in the history. After such an act of obedience, subsequent to that of abandoning his country and going he knew not whither, on the simple command of God, it is no wonder that he obtained the title of the *father of the faithful,* or the pattern of all believers."

Ch. XI. Ver. 19. which had been promised would be faithfully and literally performed, even though his son should have suffered death in such circumstances by the hand of his father. For he reasoned thus justly with himself: The power of God was able to raise his dead son to life again, and that he certainly would do it rather than that any one of his promises should fail to receive its complete accomplishment. And the venerable man was the more encouraged in forming this conclusion, by the recollection that the birth of Isaac, from parents so far advanced in years, was itself equivalent to a rising from the dead; and he who could introduce him into existence in circumstances so extraordinary, was equally able to restore life after a short suspension of existence. And indeed, the rescue of Isaac by the miraculous interposition of the angel, at the very instant when his father's hand was lifted up to strike the fatal blow, was itself little less than the resurrection of the hallowed victim, and a restoration from a state of death to the arms and heart of his fond and agonized parent, whose faith must now be more than ever confirmed in the divine promise. Thus he was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and exhibiting to the virtuous in all succeeding ages a pattern of rational and cheerful confidence in God, in circumstances the most difficult and distressing, and of the good effects of such a firm and practical faith.

(5.) The writer celebrates the faith of Isaac, ver. 20.

By faith Isaac[1] *blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things future.* Ch. XI. Ver. 20.

The history (Gen. xxvii.) relates that Isaac, advanced in life, and blind with age, confiding in the promise of God to himself, and to his father, pronounced a blessing upon both his sons, foretelling, in the spirit of prophecy, that the posterity of Esau should for a time be in subjection to the descendants of Jacob. It was indeed far from the old patriarch's intention to have pronounced the better blessing upon the younger brother. But the artful contrivance of Rebekah, and the lying fraud of Jacob, imposed upon the poor blind father, and Jacob by stealth obtained the blessing before Esau was ready to receive it; and when pronounced it was

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[1] *By faith Isaac*] Nothing could be more unreasonable or incredible than the supposition that the descent of the divine promise should be made to depend upon the unjust partiality of a doting old man, upon the wicked machinations of an artful woman, upon the lying fraud of a deceitful boy, or, finally, upon the brute force, agility and skill of a half savage, in the sports of the field. And in fact the history states that this important question had been settled long before; and that previously to the birth of the twins, when, as the apostle observes, Rom. ix. 12, neither of them could possibly have done either good or evil, the oracle had expressly entailed the promise upon Jacob, and declared that the elder should serve the younger, Gen. xxv. 22, 23. Isaac was grossly mistaken if he thought that it would be in his power to reverse the order of providence. And perhaps, when he found himself tricked out of his intention by the base conspiracy of Rebekah and Jacob, it might bring to his mind the solemn declaration of the Divine Being before the children were born, and might make him more resolute in resisting the importunities of Esau, however indignant he might be at the deceit which had been practised upon him, and at the parties concerned in the conspiracy.

Ch. XI. Ver. 20. too late to recall it. The old patriarch, recollecting probably that it had been foretold before they were born, that the elder should serve the younger, refused to retract the blessing which had been so surreptitiously obtained, and confirmed the boon, not as a reward of the hypocrisy, treachery, and falsehood of Jacob, which deserved the severest animadversion, but as a token of submission to a prior divine designation in which it was his duty to acquiesce.

(6.) He celebrates the faith of Jacob, ver. 21.

21. *By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped* leaning *upon the top of his staff.*

To this aged patriarch it was revealed that the two sons of Joseph should be the heads of two distinct tribes in Israel, and that the posterity of the younger son should be more numerous and powerful than those of the elder: this he announced to the youths themselves when they came to receive his dying blessing, placing Ephraim before Manasseh in a way which gave offence to Joseph their father, who was partial to his first-born. But the patriarch refused to withdraw his hand, confiding in the spirit of prophecy with which he was then inspired: and when he had finished the prophetic benediction, he bowed his hoary head upon the staff which supported his tottering limbs, in token of grateful adoration to that Being who disposes all things according to his pleasure, and who, at the last stage of

his wearisome pilgrimage, had permitted his eyes to be closed by that son who was the darling of his heart, whom he had long mourned over as lost, but who was now restored to him in circumstances the most prosperous and splendid, and in a season the most critical and important, whose children he embraced, and the future prosperity of whose family he had then foretold, Gen. xlviii. Ch. XI. Ver. 21.

(7.) The author notices the faith of Joseph, ver. 22.

By faith Joseph, at the end of life, mentioned the departure of the children of Israel, and gave a charge concerning his bones[1]. 22.

This excellent man survived his venerable parent many years, and died at last in a good old age, crowned with the blessings of a people whom he had saved from famine, and who had flourished under his prudent administration, and of his own family, whose ill usage of him he had requited with tenderness and beneficence. But all the honours he had enjoyed in Egypt had not obliterated the memory of the promise of God to his ancestors: he

[1] *Concerning his bones.*] "Joseph ordered that he should not be buried in Egypt, but only embalmed there in the manner practised in that country; by which bodies were reduced to a state like wood, and rendered as incorruptible. Such bodies are now called *mummies*, and they are all brought from Egypt. Joseph gave these orders that in this state he might be carried along with them when they left that country, and nothing could express a stronger faith in the divine promise, that the land of Canaan was designed for them while they were detained in Egypt." Dr. Priestley.

Ch. XI. Ver. 22. died in the firm expectation that the posterity of Israel would in due time be put in possession of the land of Canaan; and with his latest breath he solemnly adjured them at that time to carry his remains with them, and to deposit them in the burying-place of his pious ancestors, Gen. l. 25; which charge was punctually obeyed when the appointed season arrived. Thus this virtuous patriarch stands upon record as a memorable example that elevation of station does not universally efface the principles of piety; and that habits of virtue, early contracted and firmly fixed, may be preserved inviolable even amidst the cares of government, and the temptations of a court.

(8.) The author celebrates the faith of the parents of Moses, ver. 23.

23. *By faith Moses*[1], *when he was born, was concealed three months by his parents, because they saw* that he was *a graceful child, and they were not deterred*[2] *by the commandment of the king.*

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[1] *By faith Moses.*] Exod. ii. 1—3. Josephus relates that God appeared to Amram the father of Moses in a dream, and promised him a son who should deliver the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage. To this tradition, whether true or false, which no doubt was current at the time, the writer of this epistle seems to allude. Faith in this promise encouraged these pious parents to conceal their child notwithstanding the personal danger which they incurred by it. Joseph. *Ant.* lib. ii. c. 9, sect. 5. See Macknight.

[2] *They were not deterred.*] Gr. *they did not fear, i. e.* they did not so fear the tyrant's authority as to be deterred from concealing the infant for three months: but afterwards their

The next instance of laudable and practical faith that I shall mention is that of the parents of Moses, who, trusting in the wise and powerful providence of God, so far disregarded the authority of the savage tyrant of Egypt, who had ordered every male child to be put to death, that at the hazard of their own lives they concealed Moses, whose infant beauty had excited the yearnings of parental affection in a more than ordinary degree, for three months in their own dwelling. After which, in reliance upon the same divine protection, they committed the little helpless innocent to an ark of bulrushes, and placed it where Pharaoh's daughter was accustomed to bathe, hoping that Providence would in some way or other accomplish its deliverance, which happened agreeably to their wishes, and crowned their pious faith with a rich reward; the mother of the child being appointed its nurse. Ch. XI. Ver. 23.

(9.) The writer celebrates the faith of Moses in renouncing the splendour of the Egyptian court, and choosing to associate with his persecuted countrymen, ver. 24—27.

By faith Moses, after he was grown up, refused to call himself the *son of Pharaoh's daughter,* 24.
choosing rather to suffer cruel treatment with the 25.
people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin[3] *for a short time*[4].

fears induced them to expose it. Mr. Wakefield renders the words "in defiance of the order of the king."

[3] *Pleasures of sin.*] Sin here seems to be put for the idolatry

Ch. XI. Ver. 25. Moses was brought up in Pharaoh's court as the son of Pharaoh's daughter; he was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and excelled both in arts and arms. He might, had he followed the dictates of ambition, have aspired to the throne: but his pious parents, by whom he was educated, had no doubt instructed him in the secret of his birth, and in the promises of God to his renowned ancestors. When therefore he had reached his fortieth year, he renounced the honours of the court, and publicly professed himself a citizen of the despised and insulted Hebrew nation, protecting his countrymen from injury while he retained his authority in the land, and escaping into the wilderness when his zeal for the rights of his countrymen had excited the jealousy of the Egyptian tyrant. For he preferred suffering persecution with the worshipers of the living and true God, to all the honours, dignities, and privileges, he could have enjoyed in an idolatrous court, the crimes and unexampled tyranny of which he foresaw must soon draw down the vengeance of the Almighty.

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of Egypt, with which it would have been necessary for Moses to have complied, in order to have retained his station in the Egyptian court. It does not at all appear that any other violation of rectitude is intended by the expression.

[4] *A short time.*] Exod. ii. 11—14. Moses might infer from the declaration of God to Abraham, Gen. xv. 13, 14, in which, no doubt, he had been instructed by his pious parents, that the season fixed in the divine councils, for the deliverance of the Israelites and the punishment of their oppressors, was now at hand.

Esteeming the reproach of the chosen people[1] *greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked forward to the reward*[2].

Ch. XI. Ver. 26.

He might have lived in wealth and splendour in the court of Egypt, and have enjoyed every blessing which fortune could bestow. Instead of which, he chose to cast his lot amongst a set of wretched and

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[1] *The chosen people.*] χριστὸν, *i. e.* λαὸν, ver. 25, *the anointed people.* The Israelites are called christs, or anointed, *i. e.* a chosen and consecrated people. Psalm cv. 15. Hab. iii. 13. "So that the reproach of Christ may be the reproach of the people of God." Whitby; which appears to me the most probable sense. "The sense may be, that Moses looked upon the contempt and indignity which he underwent from Pharaoh, on account of his professing himself a Jew, much preferable to all the riches and honours of Egypt." Sykes.

The reproach of Christ, "such as Christ suffered." Photius *ap.* Whitby, Newcome, Harwood. "the reproach of the Messiah." Wakefield. "the reproach he should suffer for his faith in a Messiah to come." Hallett. "the scoffs cast on the Israelites for expecting the Christ to arise among them." Macknight. "for acknowledging himself one of the Israelites whom Christ had taken under his peculiar protection." Doddridge. The great error is supposing Christ to be alluded to at all. But it is not improbable that the author, who likes to argue from verbal ambiguities, meant to avail himself of the double sense of the word Christ to insinuate that the Hebrews, to whom he was writing, ought to be as ready to sacrifice all for Christ the Messiah, and for the honours and rewards of his spiritual and everlasting kingdom, as their great lawgiver of old was to give up the splendour of Pharaoh's court, and to take his lot with the Christs, the anointed and chosen but despised and persecuted people of God in former times: to share in their reproach and danger, and to expect their reward.

[2] *The reward.*] primarily, of sharing with the Israelites in the possession of Canaan under the protection of divine providence. But as all the patriarchs are said to have sought a heavenly country, this expectation also may be alluded to here as the object of the desire and hope of Moses. "he looked off from them to the retribution." Macknight. "he was looking onward to his reward." Wakefield.

Ch. XI. Ver. 26. helpless exiles, destitute of all the common comforts of life, whose only privilege was, that they were chosen by and consecrated to God, and whose only treasure was, the promise made to their pious forefathers. These were the privileges, and these the possessions, which Moses wisely preferred to the wealth of Egypt. And in firm expectation that the promise of God would in due time be fulfilled, and that, if he should not live to see this glorious event, his own immortal interests would be secure, he willingly exposed himself to the disgrace which he must necessarily incur in the estimation of those who could not enter into his views and motives, and to whom his conduct must no doubt wear the appearance of absurdity and insanity.

27. *By faith he left Egypt*[1], *not deterred by the anger of the king*[2]; *for he remained firm as seeing him who is invisible.*

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[1] *By faith he left Egypt.*] "This," says Dr. Priestley, "is perhaps ascribing too much to the faith of Moses: he evidently fled for fear of his life. It is probable, indeed, that he was a pious man, and consequently had respect to him who is invisible, to the presence and providence of God; but at that time he does not appear to have had any intercourse with God, and therefore he had no promise respecting himself, as a foundation for any particular faith in God."

[2] *Deterred by.*] Gr. *not fearing the anger of the king.* It is so expressly said, Exod. ii. 14, 15, that, when Moses fled into the Desert, he was afraid, that many expositors, viz. Hallett, Doddridge, Macknight, &c., explain this passage as referring to his last interview with Pharaoh, or to his triumphant departure from Egypt when he led the Israelites through the Red Sea. But the order of the discourse naturally leads us to understand it of his first escape from Egypt, to which this expression will be no objection if we translate the words *notwithstanding*, or,

When Pharaoh heard that the zeal of Moses had transported him so far as to put to death an Egyptian for oppressing an Israelite, he was so offended that he threatened to put Moses himself to death. But such was the interest which this great man then had in the court of Egypt, that he might no doubt easily have obtained a pardon had he returned to his allegiance: but he had renounced the grandeur of a court, and had made up his mind to all the consequences of his virtuous choice. Confiding therefore in the promise and in the providence of God, this pious chief defied the resentment of Pharaoh; and supported by a consciousness of integrity, and trusting in the guidance of that powerful Being who, though invisible, was the great object of his faith and love, he fled into the dreary and solitary wilderness. Ch. XI. Ver. 27.

(10.) He celebrates the faith of Moses and the Israelites in their observance of the first passover, ver. 28.

By faith he kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, that he who destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians[3] *might not touch theirs.* 28.

To Moses and Aaron God revealed his intention of destroying in one night all the first-born of the Egyptians, both of man and beast, Exod. xii. And

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with Mr. Wakefield, "in defiance of the anger of the king." See note on ver. 23.

[3] Of the Egyptians.] See Worsley's Translation of the New Testament.

Ch. XI. Ver. 28. to them he gave it in charge to direct the Israelites to kill a lamb, or a kid, in the afternoon of the preceding day, to roast and eat it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, as a memorial of their severe bondage in Egypt, and their hasty departure from it, and to sprinkle the blood upon the door-posts of their houses, as a symbol of protection from the destroying angel. Upon these conditions it was promised that their own families should escape the dreadful catastrophe. Relying, therefore, upon the declaration and promises of God, Moses delivered and the Israelites obeyed the mandate. Nor were they disappointed in their expectations. At midnight a lamentable and universal outcry was heard in the houses of the Egyptians; for all their first-born were instantaneously cut off, from the eldest son of the monarch, and the heir of his crown, to the first-born of the poorest tenant of the cottage: but in the houses of the Israelites, under the protection of the Almighty, all was safe: their faith was their security; and the immediate consequence of this terrible visitation was their release from a servitude of four hundred years.

(11.) The author commemorates the faith of the Israelites in their passage through the Red Sea, ver. 29.

29. *By faith the* Israelites *passed through the Red Sea*[1] *as on dry* land, *which the Egyptians attempted, and were swallowed up.*

[1] *Through the Red Sea.*] Whether the passage through the

Another remarkable instance of faith in the divine promise, which also received its proper reward, Ch. XI. Ver. 29.

Red Sea were a supernatural event, as most expositors have maintained, or whether, as Dr. Geddes and some of the German commentators contend, Moses, having acquired a knowledge of the situation of the sands during his long residence in the wilderness, took advantage of the ebb tide to conduct the Israelites over the sands, where Pharaoh and his host for want of information perished, it is certain that it is represented by the historian, and was believed by the Jews to have been, a proper miracle, and as such it is alluded to by the author of this epistle, and his reasoning is founded upon this supposition. See Geddes's *Crit. Remarks on Exod.* xiv.

Dr. Geddes has succeeded but ill, however ingenious many of his criticisms are, in his attempts to explain away the miracles of Moses. Indeed, as he denies all supernatural communications to the Jewish lawgiver, and his divine legation altogether, it is necessary to his hypothesis to get rid of the miracles. But if the fact be admitted, which it seems impossible to deny, that the theism of the Jews was beyond all comparison superior to that of their more cultivated and polished neighbours, this fact can only be accounted for through immediate divine communications, which, as their history relates, were vouchsafed to Moses: and if Moses were the medium of divine communications, it is probable that he was authorized to work miracles. Difficulties and objections may be started against particular facts, which it may not be easy to obviate, nor is it necessary. For the law, having performed its office as a pædagogue to bring us to Christ, is now discharged; and as Christians, it is sufficient for us to believe that the Jewish institution in its pure and uncorrupted form was of divine original; that its main design was to support in the world the great doctrine of the Divine Unity, and to prepare the way for the dispensation of the Messiah; and finally, that the books of the Old Testament contain many prophetic declarations, which either have received or will receive their proper accomplishment in their appointed season.

"In all these transactions," says Dr. Priestley, "which were of a most wonderful nature, no doubt Moses and all pious Israelites were actuated by a proper faith in God. If the state of the Israelites in Egypt be considered, when they were numerous indeed, but unarmed and defenceless, their masters powerful and warlike, themselves without any friend from without,

Ch. XI. Ver. 29. was that of our ancestors the Israelites under the conduct of Moses, in their passage through the Red Sea, the history of which is related in Exod. xiv. The Egyptians, mad with rage, notwithstanding the calamities which they had endured by imme-

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and the country for which they looked possessed by nations perhaps more warlike than the Egyptians themselves, with a wilderness to travel through, in which such a multitude could not naturally have subsisted a single week; if it be considered that notwithstanding these circumstances, and all the opposition which the Egyptians could give to the Israelites, they nevertheless actually did leave Egypt, passed forty years in that wilderness, and then took possession of the land of Canaan, it must be evident that there must have been some miracle in the case.

"The history of Moses makes all these transactions perfectly credible; but every other hypothesis must be utterly inadequate to account for the known facts. It is impossible to read the history of Moses without perceiving the most undeniable traces of its being written at the time of the transactions. It is in some places almost a journal of the proceedings of every day, with such a particular mention of persons and places, as is never found except in authentic histories. The books of Moses were also received as genuine and faithful narratives of events by the whole Jewish nation; who in all their apostasies never entertained a doubt of the truth of their contents. This belief could only have been produced by the most satisfactory evidence. An attempt to impose upon a nation the belief of any thing similar to this, would be treated with ridicule, and could not succeed in any degree."

How far these arguments may satisfy a dispassionate inquirer that the Pentateuch was wholly written by Moses, and that every fact is to be received as true, must be left to the reader's own judgement. The safer course appears to be, after having inferred the divine legation of Moses from the perfection of Jewish theism, to consider how far we are warranted by evidence to receive the whole Pentateuch as written or dictated by Moses himself; and to inquire whether all the facts recorded are equally authentic; and by what criteria we may separate those which are worthy of entire confidence, from those which are of a doubtful or suspicious aspect.

diate divine infliction, and exasperated, rather than humbled, by the recent disaster of the death of the first-born, with their infatuated monarch at their head, pursued the Israelites in their march, resolving to reduce them again into bondage, or to perish in the attempt. The Israelites, inclosed in the wilderness between their enraged pursuers and the sea, forgetful of all past interpositions in their favour, gave up themselves for lost, and began to murmur against their venerable leader: but Moses soon cheered their spirits, and restored their confidence in divine protection, by the promise that Jehovah would fight the battle for them. And when he ordered them to advance, and to continue their march even into the sea itself, relying upon the promise that they should pass safely through, they cheerfully obeyed; and the laws of nature being suspended by the divine energy, the waters divided to make a passage for them, and rising on each side like a wall of adamant, the armies of Israel marched through upon dry ground. Far different was the fate of Pharaoh and his host: they likewise boldly rushed into the divided sea, believing probably that this phenomenon was nothing more than the natural effect of the violent wind; and imagining themselves as safe as the fugitives whom they pursued: but they soon learned their error to their cost; for no sooner were the chosen people safely landed upon the opposite shore than the rod of Moses, under the direction of the Almighty, restoring the suspended law of nature, the element instantly resumed its

Ch. XI. Ver. 29.

Ch. XI. Ver. 29. fluidity, and overwhelmed the Egyptian host in universal and undistinguished ruin.

(12.) The writer mentions the faith of the Israelites with respect to the destruction of Jericho, ver. 30.

30. *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after a procession round* them [1] *for seven days.*

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[1] *A procession round* them.] See Wakefield's Translation, Josh. vi. The justification of the Israelites in the conquest of Canaan very much depends upon the truth of this fact: if a miracle was actually wrought to give them possession of Jericho, it was a public proof that this people in their invasion of Canaan, and the extermination of the inhabitants, acted under a divine commission. This would completely save their character. With regard to the Supreme Being, the difficulty and its solution are precisely the same, whether the Israelites were divinely authorized, or not, to execute their bloody purpose. What God permits he ordains; whatever be the means, or whoever the instruments that he employs for the execution of his sovereign purpose. And he had just as good a right to exterminate these wicked nations, with whose aggravated crimes he had borne so long, by the sword of the Israelites, as by famine, pestilence, or earthquake. And this mode of extermination possessed the further advantage, that it served as an awful warning to their successors to avoid the crimes of the people whom they had extirpated, that so they might escape their doom. See Macknight's note.

I shall further take leave to observe, that whether God did commission the Israelites to exterminate the Canaanites, according to the account in the Jewish history, or not, that history is at least consistent with itself: and it does not attribute this terrible commission to the chosen people, without at the same time affording evidence of it sufficient to satisfy and silence even the sufferers themselves. If it was true, as related in the history, that the Israelites were by a public incontestable miracle put into possession of Jericho, it must be allowed that they are to be regarded as the authorized executioners of divine justice. How far the authority of the history is sufficient to establish this fact, is quite a different question. I must, how-

When the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, armed with the terrible commission to exterminate the inhabitants both old and young, and to take possession of the country, it was absolutely necessary that there should be a solemn public indisputable attestation of the divine authority under which they acted. With this view, and to notify and establish their claim beyond all possibility of doubt, they were prohibited from using any military operations in their attack upon Jericho, the first fortified town at which they arrived; and were assured that without any efforts of their own it should be delivered into their hands. To this end the priests were required to carry the ark every day, for six days, in solemn procession, with sound of trumpet, once round the city; and on the seventh day to carry it round seven times in the same manner: and after the seventh time, the people were commanded to raise a loud shout while the trumpets were sounding, when it was promised that the wall of the city should instantly fall down: upon which Ch. XI. Ver. 30.

ever, take the liberty to observe, that it does not appear to me to be a greater mystery in providence, or a problem of more difficult solution, that the Israelites should by supernatural authority be commissioned to exterminate the Canaanites, than that conquerors in all ages should be allowed, in the natural course of things, to lay waste the countries which they subdue. In fact, the difficulty with regard to the divine government is precisely the same, whether the Israelites were or were not authorized to destroy the Canaanites: for, whatever takes place in the ordinary course of things is as truly appointed by God as any supernatural event. All is his agency: in one case he acts by established rules, in the other by a deviation from them.

Ch. XI. Ver. 30. they were required immediately to go straight forward, to take possession, and to execute faithfully their stern commission. They believed the promise, they obeyed the order, they gained possession of the city, and they exterminated the inhabitants. But if they had not placed confidence in God, they could not have succeeded in their enterprize.

(13.) The writer shows the importance of faith in the escape of Rahab from the massacre of Jericho, ver. 31.

31. *By faith Rahab the harlot*[1] *perished not with the unbelievers, having entertained the spies in peace.*

The last case that I shall particularly notice, as illustrating in a striking manner the excellence and importance of faith, is that of Rahab, who though an ignorant, and perhaps once an immoral heathen,

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[1] *Rahab the harlot.*] Josh. iv. 25. I am much inclined to agree with those Jewish and Christian writers who think that πορνη, when applied to Rahab, does not signify a prostitute. It is commonly understood by them to mean a keeper of a house of entertainment. Perhaps it means an idolatress: *q. d.* though Rahab had been a poor heathen idolatress, yet in this instance she believed in Jehovah, and was benefited by her belief, which was the means of saving herself and her family from destruction. It is generally admitted that Rahab was afterwards married to Salmon the ancestor of David, Matt. i. 5. But Dr. Geddes expresses a doubt whether this Rahab was the same person as Rahab the harlot, as she is called. See his note on Josh. ii. 1. But it is certain that she was contemporary with Salmon the son of Nahshon, Numb. ii. 3, and there does not appear to have been any other person of note of the same name. See Hallett on the text. "Rahab the hostess escaped among those who would not be persuaded." Wakefield.

was nevertheless convinced, by the report which she had heard of the wonders which God had wrought for the Israelites in the wilderness, that Jehovah was the true God, that Israel was his chosen people, that he would certainly give them a complete triumph over their enemies, and that he would put them in possession of the land of Canaan. Under this persuasion, she hospitably entertained the two men who were sent to bring an account of the country to Joshua, and concealed them from their pursuers, upon condition that they should spare her and her family when they obtained possession of the town. This promise they made and faithfully performed; and this poor woman not only escaped with her family from the destruction of her native city, but was afterwards married to a person of rank in the Hebrew nation, and from her descended, not only a line of illustrious princes, but in process of time the great Messiah himself. Ch. XI. Ver. 31.

(14.) The writer concludes his catalogue of illustrious examples of faith, by a brief recapitulation of the exploits and sufferings of many other eminent persons, upon which time does not permit him to enlarge, ver. 32—40.

1.] He commemorates some who in virtue of faith performed extraordinary exploits, ver. 32—35.

And what shall I say further? For time would fail me to discourse concerning Gideon[2]*, and Ba-* 32.

[2] *Gideon.*] See the history of Gideon, Judges vi.—viii.: con-

Ch. XI. *rak* [1], *and Sampson* [2], *and Jephthah* [3], *and David,*
Ver. 33. *and Samuel, and the prophets; who through faith*
struggled successfully against kingdoms, wrought
deliverance [4], *obtained promises, stopped the mouths*
34. *of lions, quenched the rage of fire, escaped the edge*
of the sword, became strong from weakness, were
valiant in war, put to flight the armies [5] *of foreign*

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fiding in the divine promise, he is said, with a body of three hundred Israelites, to have surprised and routed an army of a hundred and thirty-five thousand Midianites.

[1] *Barak,*] depending upon the promise of God by Deborah, with comparatively a small force defeated the vast army of Jabin, Judg. iv.

[2] *Sampson.*] His history is well known. Judg. xiii.—xvi. The particular effect of faith here alluded to seems to have been the demolition of the house of Dagon and the destruction of the Philistines at his death, Judg. xvi. 28, in answer to his prayer.

[3] *Jephthah,*] whose history is related Judg. xi. He believed in the deliverances which God had wrought for Israel in former ages, and encouraged himself in the hope that God would still protect them. His vow was a foolish one: but it is utterly incredible that he should ever have thought of sacrificing his daughter to Jehovah, or should have been permitted to perform such a vow, if he had been wicked enough to make it. She was devoted to God, and bound to perpetual virginity, which in those days was considered as a great calamity: it was peculiarly such in the case of Jephthah's daughter, as she was an only child.

[4] *Wrought deliverance.*] δικαιοσυνην. *Righteousness* or *justification* is a phrase which often occurs in the writings of Paul, in the sense of deliverance from condemnation and death. In this connexion the heroes who delivered their country are said to have wrought *righteousness,* as they were the means of recovering their countrymen from those calamities in which their idolatry and apostasy had involved them. The word is used in the same sense as applied to Noah, ver. 7. See Wakefield.

[5] *Put to flight,*] or, "overturned the camps of foreigners:" παρεμβολας εκλιναν αλλοτριων. See Macknight. See the case of Jonathan, 1 Sam. xiv. 6—20; of Gideon, Judg. vii. 13. Sennacherib's disaster is recorded 2 Kings xix.

nations, received for women their dead children brought to life again[6]. Ch. XI. Ver. 35.

From the creation of the world to the invasion of Canaan I have been enumerating some remarkable instances of the wonderful efficacy of faith in divine declarations and promises; but to proceed in this detail would occupy more time than I have to spare, and swell this epistle to an inconvenient size. I shall therefore satisfy myself with allusions to facts and circumstances which your intimate acquaintance with the history of your nation will easily bring to your recollection. I shall first remind you of some extraordinary actions which have been achieved by the heroes and champions of faith, who ventured upon many exploits in reliance upon a divine promise which in other circumstances they would not have presumed to attempt. Joshua exterminated the Canaanites, and settled Israel in the promised land: Gideon and Barak, Sampson and Jephthah, in the days when the Israelites were under the government of generals, judges, and high-priests, and when, from their proneness to idolatry, they were often defeated and for a time reduced into subjection by the neighbouring nations, were raised up by providence to deliver their country, and relying

[6] *Received for women.*] γυναικῶν. "This most elegant reading," saith Mr. Wakefield, "far beyond the reach of transcribers, is preserved by the Syriac translator." The persons alluded to are, the widow of Sarepta, whose son was raised by Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 14; and the Shunamite whose dead son was raised to life by Elisha, 2 Kings iv. 20—37. Griesbach takes no notice of this reading.

Ch. XI. Ver. 35.

upon the promise and protection of the Almighty were crowned with extraordinary success. David, by his zeal against idolatry, obtained the promise that the kingdom should be established in his posterity, and that the Messiah [1] should be numbered amongst his descendants: the prophet Daniel, confiding in God, escaped unhurt from the den of lions [2]; and the three pious and zealous youths who courageously refused to bend the knee to the golden image set up by the tyrant of Babylon, were in vain exposed to the scorching flames of the fiery furnace, which, while it destroyed their executioners, was not permitted to singe a hair of their heads [3]. Confiding in the protection of providence, the prophet Elijah boldly executed the duties of his mission, regardless of, and uninjured by the wrath of an incensed, idolatrous and revengeful queen [4]. Hezekiah, believing in the promise of God, communicated by the prophet Isaiah, recovered from a dangerous sickness, and fifteen years were added to his life [5]. Many of the heroes of the Hebrew nation distinguished themselves by their valour and success in battle; but the prince last mentioned, as the reward of his faith in the divine promise, was enabled to ransack and plunder the Assyrian camp [6], through the aid of the destroying angel, who in one

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[1] *The Messiah.*] See 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7, and Gray on the last words of David.

[2] Dan. vi. 22, 23. [3] Dan. iii. 17, 18.

[4] 1 Kings xix. 1, 2. See also Exod. xviii. 4.

[5] Isa. xxxviii. 1—8.

[6] Isa. xxxvii. 36, 2 Kings xix. 35.

night swept away the greater part of Sennacherib's army by a pestilential blast: and to conclude, such is the efficacy of faith and prayer, that Elijah, the great reformer of Israel, restored to life the son of the widow of Sarepta[7], at whose house he had resided during the famine; and his successor Elisha raised the son of the Shunamite[8], who entertained and regarded him as a prophet of God[9]. Ch. XI. Ver. 35.

2.] The writer hints at the case of many whose faith supported them under the severest sufferings and torments, ver. 35—38.

And some[10] *were tortured*[11], *not accepting deli-* —35.

[7] 1 Kings xix. 19.

[8] 2 Kings iv. 34.

[9] Upon this account of the wonders performed by faith we may remark, that the writer's argument only extends to the efficacy of faith in particular cases: he does not say any thing concerning the general character of the persons whose faith he celebrates. Some of them seem to have been persons of very loose morals, and chargeable with great crimes. They were bad men, and yet were selected by divine providence to accomplish its own benevolent designs. And this is perfectly agreeable to the general analogy of the divine dispensations, though very different perhaps from what we should antecedently have judged expedient.

[10] *And some.*] Most expositors understand the author of this epistle as alluding in this passage to the fortitude which the Jews displayed under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes; when many were put to death in severe tortures because they would not renounce their religion. The heroic conduct of Eleazar, and of the woman and her seven sons, is related in the sixth and seventh chapters of the second book of Maccabees. But Mr. Hallett thinks that no history is alluded to here but what is contained in the authentic Jewish scriptures.

[11] *Were tortured.*] ετυμπανισθησαν, "were tortured to death." Mr. Wakefield renders it, "were killed with clubs." The word is used both in a general sense and for a particular species of

Ch. XI. *verance, that they might obtain a better resurrec-*
Ver. 36. *tion*[1]. *And some experienced mockery and scourg-*
37. *ings, bonds also, and imprisonments. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were impaled*[2], *they were slaughtered by the sword; they went about in sheepskins*[3] *and in goatskins, desti-*
38. *tute, afflicted, cruelly treated, (of whom the world was not worthy,) wandering in deserts and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth.*

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torture. See Hallett. 2 Macc. vi. 16, *τυμπανον, clava, baculus,* from *τυπτω*. Gataker; Newcome, who refers to Le Clerc on Hammond, and to H. Stephens.

[1] *A better resurrection:*] that is, than the resurrection of the children just mentioned, who were raised only to a frail and mortal life. That the Jews under Antiochus suffered torture and martyrdom in hope of a resurrection to immortal life, is evident from the account in 2 Macc. vii. 9, 11, 14, 23. "Thou, like a fury," exclaims one of the tortured youths to the inhuman tyrant, "takest us out of the present life; but the king of the world shall raise us up who have died for his laws, to everlasting life."

[2] *Were impaled.*] *επειραθησαν*, from *πειραω, transfigo.* "they were pierced with stakes." See Wakefield and Newcome. Archbishop Newcome adds, that two MSS. and Syr. omit the word, with the approbation of many critics. Mill, Hallett, and Griesbach retain the common reading, *επειρασθησαν, they were tempted,* as best supported by ancient authorities, and well suiting the connexion. Hallett combats the arguments of Whitby, who conjectures that *επειρασθησαν* was inserted by some ignorant transcriber for *επρισθησαν*.

[3] *In sheepskins.*] "*i. e.* in mean clothing." Newcome. Hallett observes, that "Elias is undoubtedly the instance which the writer had in his eye. It is said in our translation that he wore a mantle, 1 Kings xix. 13, 19, 2 Kings ii. 8, 13, 14; in all which places the Greek translator uses the word *μηλωτη*, a *sheepskin.*" Clemens Romanus saith, "Let us imitate those that walked about preaching the coming of Christ in goats' skins and sheeps' skins: I mean the prophets Elias, Elisha, and Ezekiel." See Harmer, vol. iv. p. 519.

Ch. XI. Ver. 38.

The energy of faith is as conspicuous in supporting the mind under trials and sufferings, as in prompting men to deeds of heroism and renown. I have just mentioned that faith in the power of God, on some special occasions, enabled some distinguished prophets to raise children from the dead, and to restore them to their transported mothers. I now add, that some, relying with cheerful confidence on the promise and providence of God, have submitted to death in the most excruciating tortures, nobly disdaining to accept of life, and opulence, and honours, by violating conscience and apostatizing from the divine law. To this heroic resolution they were animated by the hope of a resurrection, not like that of these children to a frail and dying life, but to a life of everlasting felicity and glory. This was eminently the case with some who suffered under the bloody persecution of Antiochus. Others again, who were not exposed to martyrdom, were exercised with trials, almost or altogether, as difficult to endure. They were subjected to the most grievous insults, to scourging, and imprisonment, and chains; but faith triumphed over all. Of those who obtained the crown of martyrdom, some, like Zechariah[4], were stoned to death; others, as Isaiah[5], were sawn asunder; others were

[4] *Zechariah.*] See 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.

[5] *Isaiah.*] It is a tradition preserved both in the Babylonish and Jerusalem Talmuds, that the prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder by order of king Manasseh. This tradition is also mentioned by Justin Martyr and Jerome; and it is, says Hallett, universally agreed, that Isaiah is the person here referred to.

Ch. XI. Ver. 38.

impaled; and others, as the prophets of Jehovah, by the command of Jezebel were cut off by the sword[1]. To escape the fury of their persecutors they fled into deserts, wandered in wildernesses, and lived in caves[2], clad with the meanest raiment, destitute, like Elijah, even of the necessaries of life, and, like him, so cruelly treated by their enemies and persecutors that to them death was often preferable to life: yet such was the worth and excellence of these holy men, that the world, which treated them with so much inhumanity, was unworthy of being honoured with their residence in it, and the greatest blessings which that world could confer were infinitely short of their deserts. These holy men were the instructors and reformers of the age in which they lived; but their unwise contemporaries undervalued and neglected their instructions, and insulted and persecuted their best benefactors and friends: and such in all ages has been the spirit of ignorance, bigotry, and daring profligacy. Nevertheless, these virtuous confessors persevered in their honourable career; and, animated by the hope of future reward and of ultimate success, when they were no longer permitted to benefit their fellow-creatures by their instructions, they were contented to do it by their sufferings[3].

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[1] 1 Kings xix. 10, 14.

[2] 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13, xix. 4.

[3] *By their sufferings.*] The writer is generally thought, as I have before observed, to allude to the persecution of the Jews for their religion under Antiochus Epiphanes, the tyrant of Sy-

3.] The writer concludes this catalogue of distinguished persons with remarking, that the faith which produced these extraordinary effects was exercised upon promises far less important than those which are now made to believers in Christ, ver. 39, 40. Ch. XI. Ver. 38.

Now all these[4], *though they obtained an honourable testimony through faith*, yet *received not the promise, God having long ago provided something better for us, that they without us might not be complete*[5]. 39. 40.

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ria, in which many suffered death in extreme tortures. Particulars are related in the second book of Maccabees, ch. vi. vii. The suffering heroes were offered life, liberty, and every favour which the tyrant could bestow, if they would renounce their religion; but they spurned his offers, and joyfully submitted to insult and scourging, and death, triumphing in the hope of a resurrection to immortality. How they acquired this faith in a resurrection is very difficult to be accounted for, as it forms no part of the Mosaic revelation. It was probably a tradition, founded upon an ancient revelation. The notions, however, which the Jews entertained upon this subject were very imperfect when Christ appeared, by whose gospel alone life and immortality are brought to light.

[4] *All these.*] This expression by no means implies, as Mr. Hallett seems to apprehend (see his note on ver. 32), that all the individuals mentioned or alluded to in this chapter were virtuous characters, and such as entitled them to the hope of salvation: they are only brought forward as examples of the efficacy of faith in specific instances. The victories of Jephthah and Sampson no more prove them to have been good men, than the miracles performed by Judas would prove him to be a true disciple of Jesus.

[5] *Might not be complete.*] It is a strange conceit of Mr. Hallett's, that good men under the Mosaic dispensation continued after death in a state of insensibility till the coming of Christ: but that all good Christians when they die enter immediately upon a state of activity and happiness, and that this is the better thing provided for us. Nothing but the clearest revelation

Ch. XI. Ver. 40.

All these extraordinary men have a high character in the sacred history, because of the vigour and practical excellence of their faith. Yet, after all, the object of their faith was mean, and of little value, in comparison with ours. Most of these eminent persons expected nothing better than temporal deliverances and blessings: or, if they looked forward to a future life, their hope must have rested on a precarious foundation, and their best prospect was that of the promised Messiah; a promise, the accomplishment of which they were not permitted to see. This privilege was reserved for us who live under the dispensation of the Messiah, in whom we believe, and by whose mission and resurrection we are elevated to the assurance of a future life. To complete the illustrious catalogue of those who

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could establish a fact so highly improbable as this. The better thing provided for Christians is the actual advent of the Messiah as the object of faith; and the phalanx of those who have distinguished themselves by the energy and triumphs of their faith in former ages is represented as incomplete, till joined by the army of Christian worthies and confessors. "*something better for us:* that is, the knowledge of the Messiah." Newcome.

"None of the people of old received, or could possibly know, how the promise was to be made good. All they could do was to expect and believe that it would be performed. But God *foresaw* and ordered matters so, that we should see the whole fulfilled. . . . . These good and faithful men were not perfect, or had not a complete notion of God's purpose." Sykes. —"God has provided some better thing for us: the promise to them was the first personal appearance of the Messiah; the better thing provided for us is the promise of Christ's second appearance, that they might *then* be made perfect, but not without *us*, though we have received the accomplishment of the first without *them*." Wolfius. See Doddridge.

are entitled to high distinction on account of the achievements of their faith, it has pleased God that the names of believers in Jesus should also be added, whose exploits and sufferings, in virtue of faith in their honoured chief, will make a splendid addition to the achievements of former times; for they who enjoy peculiar privileges may reasonably be expected to distinguish themselves proportionably by honourable exertions. Ch. XI. Ver. 40.

SECTION III.

THE WRITER, in this chapter, suggests a variety of weighty considerations to dissuade and deter the Hebrew Christians from apostasy. Ch. xii. throughout. Ch. XII.

1. He presses upon their minds the examples of persevering and triumphant faith which he has just celebrated, and he especially directs their attention to that of Jesus, ver. 1—4.

Wherefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses[1], *let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin*[2] *which easily entangleth us,* Ver. 1.

[1] *Cloud of witnesses.*] Not witnesses to our exertions, but witnesses to the truth; a multitude of confessors and martyrs by whose example we ought to be animated. See Grotius, Whitby, &c. "so thick a company of men who acted by the principle of faith, and endured so many afflictions." Sykes.

[2] *The sin:*] *i. e.* apostasy, which easily entangles (ευπερισ-

Ch. XII. Ver. 1. *and let us run with perseverance the race which is appointed us.*

I have defined the nature and represented the excellence of faith in the divine promises, by referring you to those eminent examples of the triumphs of faith which are recorded in the Hebrew scriptures. Here we read of many who suffered persecution, and torments, and death, rather than renounce their principles and abandon their hopes. What is the natural inference from this representation? Surely, that it is incumbent upon us to breathe the same honourable, inflexible, persevering spirit, by which our ancestors were so nobly distinguished. Since then we are encompassed with so great a multitude of confessors and martyrs to the great principle of confidence in God, let us be ambitious to enroll ourselves in the glorious fraternity. We are like candidates in the public games to run for a prize, and the race will require our utmost exertion: let us then throw aside every weight which would retard our course, and the very garments which, by entangling our steps, would impede our exertion, and let us press forward till we reach the goal. In other words, let us lay aside all prejudice against the gospel, and all that reluctance which we who have indulged expectations so widely different from the truth

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τον), which like a long garment folds about the legs of the racer and obstructs his speed, or throws him down. See Hallett and Newcome. "Not any one sin, but every sin which is apt to get round us and entangle us, and thus to hinder us in our course." Sykes. See 1 Cor. ix. 24, 26.

are so prone to feel against the mission and character of Jesus, and which is so constant and powerful a temptation to apostasy; and having upon just grounds embraced the truth, let us resolutely persevere in our adherence to it, and approve ourselves the worthy heirs of the faith of our ancestors. Ch. XII. Ver. 1.

Looking upon Jesus, the leader and the finisher of this faith[1], *who, with a view to the joy which was set before him, endured the cross, despising the ignominy, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.* 2.

I have a greater and more interesting example to propose to you than any or all that I have already mentioned. It is that of our master Jesus himself. Look, my Christian friends, to our great leader; trace him from the beginning to the end of his course. He was the first to begin the career of faith, and the first to receive its reward. How did faith exert itself in him, and how was it recompensed? Confiding in the promise of God, that his reward should be proportioned to his labours and his suf-

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[1] *The leader and finisher:*] *i. e.* the person who exhibited a perfect example of Christian faith from beginning to end, both in its exertions and its rewards. "Christ was not the Author of Faith, but the Leader on to it. He was the person that goes before and leads us on as captain. And thus is this word used as often as it is applied to our Saviour. Acts iii. 25, v. 31, Heb. ii. 10. The Leader of *faith* is one who leads the way in faith, encouraging others to follow. And the Finisher must be one that has gone through and brought to perfection *faith*: one who, by showing what may be accomplished or done by the practice of faith, has done and borne all that can be done in consequence of that principle." Sykes.

Ch. XII. Ver. 2. ferings, he endured crucifixion, he made light of the disgrace, he did not shrink from duty, or from suffering: and proportioned to his faith is his honour and reward. He was raised from the dead, and is exalted to the right hand of God, to power, and glory, and to be the head of his church. Shall we hesitate then to believe and to obey the gospel, when the pain and shame to which we are exposed by it can bear no proportion to what he endured for us?

3. *For consider*[1] *him who endured such opposition of sinners to himself, lest ye be wearied*[2]*, fainting*
4. *in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood combating against sin*[3].

In order to confirm your virtuous and Christian resolution, consider well the analogy between the sufferings of Jesus and your own: the fortitude

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[1] *Consider.*] αναλογισασθε, trace the analogy between his case and yours. "The word signifies, to reason, to argue from, to compare cases." Sykes.

[2] *Lest ye be wearied.*] "καμνειν est tædio laboris affici: εκλυεσθαι, lassari. Hæc duo verba a palæstra, et ab athletis recepta sunt, qui dicuntur καμνειν κ. τ. λ. quum vel animi, vel corporis robore ac viribus destituti, victas dant adversario manus, palmamque concedunt." Rosenmuller. "that ye may not give out." Worsley.

[3] *Combating against sin.*] "The phrase seems to be borrowed from gladiatorial exhibitions." Newcome. *Unto blood,* μεχρις αἱματος. q. d. *ad sanguinis usque profusionem. Pudeat vos defatigari levioribus malis. Illi quorum supra meminimus partim ad capitalia supplicia, partim ad tormenta rapti fuere, Christus ipse mortem, et quidem crucis perpessus est. Vos libertatis tantum et facultatum damna aut pericula incurristis.* ἁμαρτιαν *hic intellige defectionem a religione Christianâ.*" Rosenmuller. *Sin,* perhaps the persecuting power; and *sinners,* in the preceding verse, persecutors.

which he exhibited, and the glory which he acquired. You meet with opposition and persecution from the enemies of the gospel: so did he. His doctrine was discredited, his mission was despised, his character was calumniated, his miracles were ascribed to Beelzebub, his person was insulted, and, finally, he was condemned as a blasphemer, and crucified as a traitor. Yet he bore all with magnanimity; he declined no suffering which was expedient as a testimony to truth, and to accomplish the purposes of his mission. And what have you suffered in comparison with him? You have indeed been insulted, calumniated, robbed, and imprisoned, and you have borne all with a patience and fortitude which has done you the highest credit: but you have not yet, like your great leader, been called forth to sacrifice life in the defence of truth, and in the severe conflict with the persecuting power. Prepare yourselves, my dear brethren, for this last and greatest trial: animated by the example of your honoured master, by the pattern of his sufferings, and by the splendour of his recompense, faint not, halt not, in the career of glory; persevere in your honourable course, and cheerfully submit to bear the cross, that so you may ultimately obtain the crown. Ch. XII. Ver. 4.

2. The writer reminds the Hebrew Christians that persecutions themselves are proofs of paternal affection, and that they would be ultimately benefi-

Ch. XII. cial; consequently that they afford no just ground for apostasy, ver. 5—11.

1.) Correction in a limited degree is what every son may expect from a parent, and the persecutions they endured were proofs that God acknowledged them as his genuine children, ver. 5—8.

Ver. 5. *And have ye*[1] *forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth*[2] *with you as with sons* (Prov. iii. 11, 12), *My son, think not lightly of the discipline of* 6. *the Lord, nor faint under his reproof; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*[3]?

I have just hinted that persecution is a fierce antagonist, with which it will be needful for you to struggle to the last extremity like your glorious leader, if you are desirous to win the prize. But this potent enemy may be regarded in a less formidable and more conciliatory light. Persecution is a divine discipline, intended to correct, to strengthen,

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[1] *And have ye.*] Mr. Hallett reads this as an interrogation; and observes, "that it is not likely that the writer here designed to accuse the Hebrews of having forgotten the scriptures."

[2] *Which reasoneth.*] διαλεγεται. See Macknight. Mr. Wakefield translates the passage, "have ye forgotten that encouraging voice, which talketh with you as with sons?"

[3] *And scourgeth.*] The modern Jews and our translation point and understand the original, Prov. iii. 12, as signifying, "even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." The writer of this epistle follows the Greek version, and the original equally admits both. But the parallelism of the sentence is better preserved in the LXX. than in the English translation. The Arabic, Syriac, and Chaldee follow the Greek version. The Latin Vulgate agrees with the English. See Hallett and Sykes.

and to improve the mind, and persecutors are a rod in the hand of God, employed by him to fulfill his gracious purposes; nor can they do less, or more, than his paternal wisdom is pleased to appoint. Your own scriptures, my beloved brethren, bear me out in this representation. Do not you recollect the advice and the reasoning of Solomon in the book of Proverbs, ch. iii. 11, 12, where, addressing himself to his reader, as a father to his son, he urges him neither to be insensible to the discipline of affliction, nor yet to sink into despondency under it: and he enforces this advice by the just and affecting consideration, that all affliction, of whatever kind, proceeds from God, and that it is a discipline with which he usually visits those whom he acknowledges as his sons, those who most resemble him, who are most dear to him, for whom he has provided an everlasting inheritance, and whom he is training up, by this painful but needful and salutary exercise, for the possession and fruition of it, when the season of maturity shall arrive. Ch. XII. Ver. 6.

Bear chastisement[4] *with patience: God is dealing with you*[5] *as with sons: for what son is there* 7.

[4] *Bear chastisement.*] Mr. Wakefield observes, that "the old versions unanimously disown the conjunction εἰ, and this gives beauty and propriety to the passage." The Alexandrine, Clermont, and many other manuscripts read εἰς.

[5] *God is dealing with you.*] προσφέρεται. "God is offered, or offereth himself, to you as to sons." Sykes. See this use of προσφέρεται in Grotius, Raphelius, Xenophon, and Wetstein." Bowyer.

"*Hoc sensu verbum sæpe obvium est apud bonos auctores, præcipue Demosthenem.* Agit vobiscum tanquam cum liberis, *osten-*

Ch. XII. Ver. 8. *whom his father chastiseth not? But if ye be without chastisement, of which all* others *are partakers, certainly ye are spurious* [1], *and not* legitimate *sons.*

Let the considerations which the wise prince suggests to his readers reconcile you, my brethren, to a persecuted and suffering state. Look beyond second causes: think not upon the malice and wickedness of your adversaries: trace all to God: it is by his permission they act: it is he that is inflicting parental chastisement by their instrumentality. Murmur not at his dispensations. God is acting the part of a wise and affectionate parent. He corrects because he loves, and wills the happiness of his children. If you were not exercised with the discipline of suffering and persecution, as all true believers are, it would be a proof that you were not the children of God, but children of the world; for the world loves and cherishes its own offspring; and if your conduct was such as to escape persecution in times like these, it would be a proof that you are not what you profess to be, true believers in Christ; but wicked hypocrites, who make a profession of Christianity only so far as it suits your own convenience, and to answer some sinister end.

2.) The obligation they were under to acquiesce and submit to the divine discipline was beyond com-

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dit se vestri habere curam, saluti vestræ prospicere, ut solent patres, qui liberos bene educare student." Rosenmuller.

[1] *Spurious.*] "The meaning is, no due care is taken of you, no concern is shown about your welfare." Sykes.

parison greater than that under which they had lain to earthly parents, ver. 9—11. Ch. XII.

Have we then[2] *had natural fathers*[3] *who chastised* us, *and whom we reverenced? and shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits*[4], *and live*[5]? Ver. 9.

Has the discipline with which we have been exercised by wise and virtuous parents in the days of childhood produced that filial awe and reverence in our minds which has induced us upon all occasions, without hesitation or reluctance, to obey their orders? and is it not much more reasonable to resign ourselves entirely to the will and direction of our heavenly Father, to whom we owe existence and all its blessings? obedience to whom will ensure everlasting life, while disobedience will be attended with consequences far more terrible than the punishment

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[2] *Have we then.*] Wakefield, Newcome, and others, read this as a question. Mr. Wakefield observes, that the same elegant construction is found in other good writers. See Bowyer.

[3] *Natural fathers.*] So Wakefield. πατερας της σαρκος, *fathers of our flesh.*

[4] *Father of spirits.*] τω πατρι των πνευματων, "our spiritual father." Wakefield.—"patri spirituum: *cui nos omnes corpus et animam debemus, ut* Num. xvi. 22. *vel potius,* patri spirituali, *patri qui est spiritus perfectissimus, qui nunquam pro lubitu, sine idoneis rationibus castigat, vel errores in castigando admittit, ut patres humani solent. Nam describitur Deus ut parens, non ut creator.*" Rosenmuller.

[5] *And live.*] Dr. Doddridge observes that the writer here alludes to the law, Deut. xxi. 18, &c. which inflicts capital punishment on the disobedient child; and he mentions this as an instance of the writer's forcible way of suggesting the most weighty thought, sometimes in an oblique manner and in very few words. He ascribes the epistle to Paul, and observes that many such passages are to be found in that apostle's writings.

Ch. XII. of death, inflicted by the law of Moses on the rebellious son.

Ver. 10. *For they indeed corrected us for a short time*[1] *as they thought fit*[2], *but He for our advantage*[3], *that we might be partakers of his holiness*[4].

Earthly parents, in the discipline which they administered, generally intended well, and correction had its use: but the motives even of the best of parents are not always pure, nor their judgement infallible. Caprice, passion, partiality, nay, even cruelty, occasionally dictate paternal chastisement: and sometimes, with the best intentions, they are mistaken, both with regard to the cause, the nature, the measure, and the effect of the correction which they apply. But the father of spirits is infinitely remote from all infirmity of this kind. He has no motive but kindness; he has no measure but wisdom; he never errs as to the cause, the time, the degree, the nature, or the duration of the discipline with which he visits his frail and suffering

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[1] *For a short time.*] προς ολιγας ἡμερας, *for a few days.* Dr. Doddridge observes, but perhaps it is too great a refinement, "that this is to be applied both to our earthly parents and to our heavenly Father; and it contains a beautiful and comfortable intimation that this whole life, when compared with our future being, is but as a few days: indeed infinitely less than the days of childhood to those of the longest life of man upon earth."

[2] *As they thought fit.*] κατα το δοκειν αυτοις, "as it seemed fit to them. Perhaps not always rightly." Newcome. "after their own humour." Wakefield.

[3] *For our advantage.*] επι το συμφερον. "for our profit." Newcome. "for our good." Wakefield.

[4] *Partakers of his holiness.*] "might become holy as he is holy." Newcome.

children: he intends their good, and he effects it; nor will he desist till he accomplishes his purpose; till he has moulded them to that filial temper and spirit to which it is his will to form them; to a resemblance to himself in holiness and purity. Nor are those sufferings, which are brought upon us by the envy and malice of persecutors themselves, to be regarded in any other light than as visitations from God. For the rage and malice of angry and violent men are as entirely under the direction and controul of divine providence as a disease or a tempest. Ch. XII. Ver. 10.

Now no correction for the present is a subject of joy[5], *but of sorrow: nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those that are exercised*[6] *by it.* 11.

I do not mean, by any thing which I have said, to divest you of the feelings of human nature, or to advise you to act as if you were insensible to suffering. All suffering is painful; and the sufferings

[5] *No correction is,* &c.] δοκει ειναι, *seemeth to be:* but δοκει is here an expletive. See Hallett and Newcome.

[6] *Exercised.*] γεγυμνασμενοις, "to those who are trained by it." Macknight; who remarks, that "there is an allusion to those who were trained to the combat by the exercises of the palæstra." Dr. Doddridge supposes that "the peaceful fruit of righteousness contains an allusion to the crown of olive given to the victor in the Olympic games, which was an emblem of peace." He mentions, that "Bos translates the word ειρηνικον, *pleasant, joyful;* and that Wolfius supposes an allusion to the peace of God, which we obtain by faith."

"Though at first all chastening is matter of sorrow, and not of joy, yet afterwards it produces quiet of mind, and such inward peace in the progress in virtue and goodness as abundantly compensates the grief at first felt." Sykes.

Ch. XII. Ver. 11. which you have endured, as well as those to which you will in all probability be called out, are of the most exquisite kind; they are such as you cannot but feel most severely: but let them not alienate your heart from God, nor tempt you to apostatize from your Christian profession: for be assured, that whatever you endure in the cause of truth shall hereafter find an abundant compensation; and persevering fortitude shall be crowned with distinguished honour and everlasting peace.

3. The writer urges the believing Hebrews to remove whatever might impede the progress of others, and to discountenance those whose evil example, like that of Esau, might have a pernicious influence, ver. 12—17.

1.) He exhorts the Hebrew believers, from the considerations which he had offered, to encourage themselves to a vigorous prosecution of their Christian course, ver. 12—14.

12. *Therefore set right*[1] *the hands which hang down,*
13. *and the enfeebled knees; and make smooth paths*[2]

[1] *Set right.*] ανορθωσατε. "*Quapropter remissas manus et genua languescentia erigite.*" Rosenmuller. "bring to their right position." Macknight. "Ανορθοω, *surrigo, sursum vel rursus erigo—metaphoricè, reficio, in pristinum meliorem statum reddo.*" Schleusner. The words are taken from Isa. xxxv. 3, LXX. with a little variation. The prophet calls upon the weak and feeble to rouse and exert themselves. As Rosenmuller observes, it cannot be supposed that the prophet alludes to the Grecian games, but rather to those who were faint and weary with a long journey. The Hebrews had been harassed with persecution, and were in danger of apostasy.

[2] *Smooth paths.*] "τροχιας ορθας· τροχια, *semita, via.* Sen-

for your feet, that the limb *which halts may not* Ch. XII.
be put out of joint[3], *but rather be healed. Pursue* Ver. 14.
peace with all men, *and that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*[4].

Thus you see that affliction and persecution are no proof of a bad cause, nor any reason why you should desert your profession. On the contrary, they rather afford a presumption that you, and the cause for which you suffer, are under the special care and providence of God. Do not then, my brethren, give way to discouragement and despondency. Having advanced so far, persevere to the end: rouse your spirits, summon up your resolution, renew your vigour and your activity in your Christian career. You have indeed a rugged path before you, and the limbs of some of you begin to fail: but be not disheartened; do not stop, do not look back; level the ruggedness of the way; I have furnished you with materials; press forward, therefore, avoiding every occasion of stumbling, every

sus igitur, Facite complanari vobis vias per quas ituri estis." Rosenmuller. Hallett says the word is used in the same sense Prov. iv. 11, 12, xi. 5, xii. 15.

[3] *Put out of joint.*] See Macknight. "ινα μη το χωλον εκτραπη. *Ne membrum debile luxetur, sed sanetur potius.* το χωλον *hic est membrum corporis ubi nervi aliquid de vigore suo perdidere.*" Rosenmuller. "*Talia membra, si iter fiat per loca inæqualia, facile loco suo excidunt, sive luxantur, quod hic est* εκτρεπεσθαι." Grotius, Rosenmuller.

[4] *See the Lord.*] See Matt. v. 8, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, Rev. xxii. 4. In this expression some have supposed a beautiful allusion to the cloud of glory in the most holy place, into which none but the high-priest was permitted to enter. But in the new Jerusalem all shall be admitted to the beatific vision; all will be high-priests, clothed in holiness as in a pontifical robe.

Ch. XII. Ver. 14. act which would wound your integrity and disable you from proceeding. Live in peace: do not unnecessarily give offence, nor provoke persecution; and be not unwilling to associate in Christian communion with those who may not see the necessity of submitting to the yoke of the law. Above all things practise holiness; not legal holiness merely; but put on that robe of universal virtue, which, like the golden garments of Aaron, will qualify you for admission into the most holy place, and will secure your acceptance with God.

2.) He exhorts them to mark and to discountenance those whose evil example, like that of Esau, would have a pernicious influence upon others, ver. 15—17.

15. *Carefully observing lest any one fall short of the gift of God*[1], *lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble* you[2], *and by it many be polluted.*

Be watchful over one another. Often look attentively around, and see if there be any one of your number who is wavering in his profession, and ready

[1] *The gift of God.*] της χαριτος, *grace, favour:* the dispensation of the gospel, so called as the gratuitous gift of God. Titus ii. 11, 2 Cor. vi. 1. "*falling short of,* υστερων απο, is no where else used in the New Testament. It often occurs without a preposition, and signifies, *to be wanting,* or *deficient in.* Rom. iii. 23, 1 Cor. i. 7, John ii. 3. Here it means *failing to attain,* through sloth or carelessness." Sykes.

[2] *Trouble you.*] ενοχλη. This is the reading of all the copies and versions. But the words are a citation, or nearly such, from Deut. xxix. 18, LXX., where the reading is εν χολη, which is preferred by Grotius, Mill, and Wakefield, who translates the words, "lest any root of bitterness, as gall, spring up."

to decline from the faith, either through fear of persecution, or disgust at the doctrine of the gospel; and observe particularly whether there be any who, not satisfied with their own defection, are endeavouring to sow the seeds of discontent and disaffection among their brethren, so that others are in danger of being seduced by them from their allegiance to the truth; and if such dangerous members are to be found in your community, mark them well, and first endeavour to reclaim them, and, if possible, to bring them back to the faith: but, if they are irrecoverable, disown them altogether; hold no fellowship with them; but root up and cast away the poisonous weed, that it may not diffuse its baleful influence and destroy the crop. Ch. XII. Ver. 15.

Lest there be *any fornicator, or profane* person, *like Esau*[3], *who, for one repast, gave away* 16.

[3] *Fornicator, or profane* person, *like Esau.*] This account of Esau's selling his birthright is related Gen. xxv. 29: that of his unavailing regret at being cheated out of his father's blessing, Gen. xxvii. 30—40. Esau is called a fornicator; probably because he married into a heathen family, Gen. xxvi. 34; and perhaps he might tolerate, if not practise, idolatrous worship. Idolatry is often called *fornication* in the scriptures, not only because it allowed lewdness, and in some cases even required prostitution, but more especially because the connexion between God and his chosen people being represented as a marriage covenant, idolatry was a violation of that covenant. An idolater, therefore, is called a fornicator, and the idolatrous church a harlot. See Taylor's *Key to the Romans*, ch. ii. sect. 11. Esau is also called *profane*, because he despised and sold his *birthright*. The birthright that he sold was no doubt the entail of the promise, which he must have known to have been made upon the family of Isaac, and which probably he did not know to have been settled before his birth upon the posterity of his younger brother. He was criminal, therefore, in parting with

Ch. XII. Ver. 17. *his birthright. For ye know, that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no way to change* his father's *mind*[1], *though he sought it earnestly*, even *with tears.*

Observe further, whether there be any persons among you who are attached to the licentious indulgences of heathenism, who set little value upon the privileges and the promises of the gospel, and who are willing to sacrifice all their professions and all their hopes to the gratification of their appetites, and to their secular interests, as Esau sacrificed the

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a privilege to which he thought he had a claim. Perhaps he expected, that by the blessing of Isaac he might recover his lost birthright; but out of this he was again tricked by the base artifices of Rebekah and Jacob; nor could he by all his tears and passionate exclamations prevail upon his father to revoke the grant. But though the conduct of Esau was reprehensible, it is no excuse for the meanness, fraud, and falsehood of Rebekah and Jacob. And it ought to be remembered, that the descent of the promise did not in the least degree depend upon the success of these tricks and impositions of the younger brother, but had been fixed by Providence, independently on the merits of either, previous to their birth: Gen. xxv. 23, Rom. ix. 12. This state of things is in perfect unison with the general dispensations of divine providence, by which external advantages are continually dispensed promiscuously without any regard to character.

"To be *profane* is to treat with contempt any thing that God appoints, knowing it to be his appointment; or, if God himself be treated not with that reverence and respect which is due to his majesty, this is properly profaneness." Sykes.

[1] *To change* his father's *mind.*] μετανοιας. See Wakefield, Newcome. "μετανοια does not signify here *repentance*, but *change of sentiment.*" Owen *ap.* Bowyer. Vide chap. vi. 1, where the same word occurs in the same sense. *Repentance from dead works: i. e.* change of mind from the works of the law, called *dead works* because they leave those who rely upon them under sentence of death: ceasing to depend upon them for justification.

privileges of his primogeniture for one miserable meal, plainly proving that he valued them not. Wretched indeed is the case of these thoughtless and wicked apostates. Esau, the surrender of whose birthright had been extorted from him by the cravings of hunger, and by the ungenerous conduct of Jacob, and who had been cheated out of his father's blessing by the joint artifice of his mother and his brother imposing upon the credulity of a weak old man, was soon and deeply sensible of his loss. This, however, he could not repair, for all his tears and bitter exclamations could not prevail upon Isaac to recall the blessing. So, likewise, those wicked apostates who, in contradiction to their better judgements, sacrifice their Christian birthright, their principles and their hopes, to the gratification of their passions, and to views of self-interest, will another day, when it is too late, have their eyes opened to see and bitterly to lament their folly. In the mean time, it is your duty to exclude such persons from Christian communion, that others may not be corrupted by their pernicious example. Ch. XII. Ver. 17.

4. The writer presses this duty of stedfastness, from the consideration of the different spirit of the law and gospel, one being a dispensation of terror, the other of mercy, ver. 18—24.

1.) He represents the awful pomp with which the law was delivered at Mount Sinai, but which did not accompany the new dispensation, ver. 18—21.

Ch. XII. Ver. 18. *Moreover*[1], *ye are not come to the mountain which was the object of touch*[2], *and which burned with fire, nor to the thick cloud, and darkness, and*
19. *tempest, nor to the blast of the trumpet, and the sound of words, the hearers of which entreated*[3] *that the discourse might not be addressed to them*
20. *any more, for they could not endure that strict command, If even a beast touch the mountain, it*
21. *shall be stoned*[4]*; and so terrible was the appearance, that Moses said*[5], *I exceedingly fear and tremble.*

The mild and gentle spirit of the new dispensation, and the glorious privileges which it confers, form an additional and very powerful motive for a faithful adherence to it, which must operate very

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[1] *Moreover.*] γαρ. "This is not an inference from what immediately precedes, but an additional reason for perseverance: connected with ver. 15." Sykes.

[2] *Object of touch.*] ψηλαφωμενῳ, a hebraism for ψηλαφητῳ. Grotius. Not that *might be touched,* for the people were forbidden to approach it, but which was the *object of touch;* tangible, solid, in opposition to Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem; which was spiritual, and not perceptible by the senses. Mr. Wakefield gives the sentence a different turn; viz. "a mountain spread all over and burning with fire." "an earthly material mountain." Newcome.

[3] *Entreated.*] See Exod. xix. 16—19, xx. 1, 18, 19.

[4] *It shall be stoned.*] Exod. xix. 12, 13. The words added in the received text, "or thrust through with a dart," are wanting in most of the ancient manuscripts and versions. "They were probably a marginal insertion." Owen, Bowyer.

[5] *Moses said.*] This declaration of Moses does not appear in the history: hence some have inferred that the epistle to the Hebrews was not written by a Jew, but there might be a tradition to this effect; and the circumstance itself is highly probable.

strongly upon every candid and ingenuous mind. There is nothing in the promulgation of the doctrine of Christ to alarm your fears, like the awful scenes which took place at the promulgation of the law. You are not conducted through a dreary and perilous wilderness to a lofty mountain, the object of sight and sense, burning with fire, enveloped in smoke, darkened with clouds, and involved in tempests. You hear no alarming blast of a trumpet, no supernatural voice, articulating sounds such as struck terror into the Jewish hosts, and induced the dismayed people unanimously and earnestly to request that Moses would be their mediator with God, to communicate the divine commands, that they might not again be terrified with those tremendous thunders. For they were struck with horror at all they saw and heard; and trembled at the rigour of the prohibition which had been issued to prevent their passing the appointed limits, which extended to beasts as well as to men: and Moses himself was no doubt exceedingly alarmed, though the history does not expressly mention it, and we must needs suppose that he dare not have ascended the mountain and ventured into the thick darkness *where God was*, if he had not been specially encouraged and fortified for the occasion. All this alarming apparatus was extremely well suited to the introduction of a dispensation of terror. But it is our happiness to have been admitted into a more mild and liberal dispensation, a dispensation of mercy and peace, which addresses itself, not to our senses and

Ch. XII. Ver. 21.

Ch. XII. Ver. 21. passions, but to our reason, not to our fears, but to our love and gratitude, and which required not to be published with such terrific pomp.

2.) The writer contrasts the mild spirit of the gospel with the severity of the law, under the figure of an introduction to the privileges and society of a free and a happy community, and to the solemnities of a spiritual temple in heaven, ver. 22—24.

22. *But ye are come*[1] *to Mount Sion*[2], *even to the*

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[1] *But ye are come.*] The design of the writer is to contrast the mild and gentle spirit of the gospel with the terrors of the law, and from this consideration to deduce an argument for stedfastness in the faith: and he effects his purpose by an ingenious allegory.

In the course of his epistle he has represented the visionary tabernacle which was exhibited to Moses in the Mount, for a model of the grand Mosaic tabernacle, as having a real existence in the heavenly Sion, and being beyond all comparison superior to that of which it was the model. In the sanctuary of this tabernacle God resides, upon his mercy-seat, and here Jesus officiates as the high-priest, propitiating with his own blood. Now, as the law at its first promulgation introduced the affrighted Israelites to the terrors of Sinai, so the gospel introduces believers to all the glories and privileges of this heavenly Jerusalem.

Keeping this imagery in view, the whole of the author's discourse in the three following verses is not only consistent and intelligible, but highly beautiful, and apposite. In a figurative style he describes the privileges of the gospel state. Whereas, upon any other supposition, if the author is interpreted literally, whether what he advances is applied to the state of things on earth, or in heaven, or partly to one and partly to the other, the whole appears unintelligible, inconsistent, and irrelevant. Of the commentators which I have consulted, Dr. Sykes appears to have approached the nearest to the true meaning of the writer.

[2] *To Mount Sion.*] Hallett justly observes that Sion was the old city where David dwelt. Solomon's temple was built upon

city of the living God[3], *to the heavenly Jerusalem*[4], *and to myriads of messengers* of God[5], *to the general assembly*[6], *and congregation of the* Ch. XII. Ver. 23.

Mount Moriah, 2 Chron. iii. 1. Hence Mount Sion never signifies the place of the old Jewish temple. Afterwards David and the other prophets speak of Mount Sion as the place where the gospel would be first published to all nations, and whither people of all nations, whether Jews or Gentiles, would assemble and worship together, Isa. ii. 3, 1 Pet. ii. 5, 6. "Ye have joined yourselves to a dispensation which has nothing terrible or difficult." Sykes.

[3] *The city of the living God.*] The gospel state, represented under the figure of a community consecrated to God, and under his direction. *The living God:* though the patriarchs, and those to whom the promises were originally made, died in faith, only seeing them afar off, God is living still, and will ever live, to fulfill all his promises. The city of God is the city where God resides, on the mercy-seat of that celestial sanctuary which was exhibited to Moses.

[4] *The heavenly Jerusalem.*] The city of Jerusalem was typical of the Christian church. The *upper* or heavenly Jerusalem is opposed to the Jerusalem that *now is;* i. e. to the state of things under the law, Gal. iv. 25, 26. And therefore the heavenly Jerusalem does not here signify heaven, or the place where all good men shall dwell after the resurrection, but the state of things under the gospel, or the community of believers. In the present allegory, it is the city where that heavenly tabernacle is fixed which Moses saw in the mountain.

[5] *To myriads of messengers* of God.] μυριασιν αγγελων, *myriads,* that is, tens of thousands, or a very large number of angels. But as the term αγγελος is ambiguous, and is used in the first chapter to express former prophets and messengers of God, there is no difficulty in taking it in a similar sense here; and of understanding the writer as alluding to the far greater number of prophets and teachers under the gospel than under the law, and especially to the great number of missionaries which were employed at the first promulgation of the gospel. These are called *angels* or *messengers* 2 Cor. viii. 23, Rev. i. 20.

[6] *To the general assembly.*] πανηγυρει. Dr. Doddridge observes from Albert, *Observ. Philolog.* p. 441, that "this word properly signifies a stated convention upon some joyful festival occasion, and is particularly applied to the concourse at the Olympic

Ch. XII Ver. 24. *first-born, enrolled in heaven*[1], *and to God the judge of all*[2], *and to just men made perfect*[3], *and*

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games: "in which view," adds Dr. Doddridge, "it expresses a very lively and elegant opposition to the case of the Israelites, who were struck with a general terror when they were convened before Mount Sinai." This is no doubt the writer's meaning here: *q. d.* in this city of our solemnities the gospel introduces us to the celebration of a joyful universal festival, in which our hearts, instead of shrinking with terror, may justly expand with delight. It is plain that he is speaking of a state of things now existing, not of what will happen after the resurrection. "πανηγυρις *sæpe est conventus populi Israelitici ad Deum laudandum.*" Rosenmuller.

[1] *Congregation of the first-born enrolled in heaven.*] εκκλησια πρωτοτοκων. "εκκλ. *church*, signifies all who are *called out* of the world, and entitled to an eternal inheritance in heaven." Sykes. "The right and privilege of the first-born was, that they were all God's property, and sanctified to him. Exod. xiii. 2, Numb. iii. 13, viii. 17. The Levites were taken instead of them. Now by Christ we are all called to be the first-born: *i. e.* to be hallowed, and to be God's peculiar." Sykes.

Enrolled in heaven, απογεγραμμενων. The allusion here is to a book that contained the names of the first-born. Numb. iii. 40. *in heaven:* in the heavenly Jerusalem, as citizens entitled to all the rights and privileges of the holy city, in whose records they are now registered. The same scenery is still supported.

[2] *To God the judge of all.*] "Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, were the only persons that were admitted to see the God of Israel. Exod. xxiv. 9, 10: the rest of the people were not permitted. But now every man is called upon to come to God, to see him as he is." Sykes. The *costume*, if one may so express it, is still kept up. Every believer is admitted into the holy of holies, to see the divine glory on the mercy-seat. To *see* God is to form those just and encouraging views of the divine attributes and character which the gospel exhibits.

Macknight justly remarks, that "God is fitly styled the Judge of all, or universal monarch, agreeably to the phraseology of the Hebrews, who called those persons *judges*, who exercised sovereign rule in Israel." "to God the judge and justifier of all believers, Jews and Gentiles." Hallett; who well observes, that "the word *all* was not carelessly inserted here."

[3] *And to just men made perfect.*] πνευμασι δικαιων τετελειω-

to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant[4], *and to a blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better than that of Abel*[5].

Ch. XII. Ver. 24.

μενων· "the spirits of just men made perfect." The *spirit* of a man is a man himself, 1 Cor. ii. 11; the spirit of God is God himself, ibid. The spirit of Timothy is Timothy himself, 2 Tim. iv. 22. See also 2 Cor. ii. 13, Rom. viii. 16, Philem. ver. 25: the *spirits of just men*, therefore, are *just men themselves*. Concerning these this writer teaches, that whereas the law could make nothing perfect, ch. x. 1, Christ hath by his one offering for ever perfected those who are sanctified." Heb. x. 14. To the assembly of just men thus made perfect does the gospel introduce those who believe; and who are themselves, therefore, justified and made perfect by the blood of Christ, that is, perfectly released from the condemning sentence, and from the tyrannical authority of the law which is abolished by the death of Christ.

By this interpretation the author appears to be intelligible and consistent. But if by the "spirits of just men made perfect," we understand separate souls in an intermediate state, the observation is not only irrelevant, but it is not true. For in what sense can believers in Christ be said to be now introduced into the society of separate spirits in heaven? or what privilege have they in this respect above good men under the law? "By this," says Dr. Priestley, "is not to be understood the state of good men in a future world, for to this they were not arrived; but to that greater perfection of character, and the superior privileges which the gospel enables them to attain."

[4] *Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.*] The writer has shown at large that Jesus, as mediator of the new covenant, after having suffered death as the victim by which the covenant is ratified, has since entered into the celestial tabernacle to officiate as high-priest in the holy of holies; where it is the privilege of believers to be introduced to him through the gospel. See ch. viii. 6, ix. 15—21.

The same scenery is still sustained: the meaning of which is, that by the gospel we become acquainted with the character, the mission, the doctrine, and the offices of Christ.

[5] *A blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better than that of Abel.*] Griesbach reads κρειττον for κρειττονα, and το for τον, *better* for *better things*, and *that of* Abel for *than* Abel.

The believer, introduced to Jesus in the sanctuary, is sprinkled by him with his own blood, ch. ix. 13, 19, 20; which speaketh better than that of Abel. The blood of Abel, spilt by his

Ch. XII. Ver. 24. I have been describing to you the terrors of the law, of Mount Sinai, of its darkness, its thunders, its lightnings and its earthquake: and of that tremendous voice of God, which our ancestors dared not continue to hear. I will now illustrate the gentle spirit of the gospel, the mildness of its introduction, and the excellence of its privileges.

Under the guidance of the gospel you have been led to *Mount Sion*, that holy mountain, the mountain of the Lord, from which the oracles of God have long since announced that his law should go forth, that there all nations should assemble to worship, Isa. ii. 2, 3.

You have been brought to the *city of the living God*, to that holy and happy place which was the subject of the divine promise to your pious ancestors, who never were put into possession, but died in faith: to a city consecrated to the God who, while generation after generation passes away, ever lives to fulfill his promises to the minutest iota; to that *heavenly Jerusalem*, where the true tabernacle is fixed, and that heavenly sanctuary is opened, in which our great high-priest officiates, of whom you

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wicked brother, cried for justice out of the ground, Gen. iv. 10; that of Christ, wantonly and maliciously shed by his wicked countrymen and brethren, also has a voice, but it is the voice of pardon, of kind intercession: "Father, forgive them! they know not what they do." And this blood, sprinkled on the believer, reconciles him to God; he no longer appears as an offender against the law. It reconciles believers of all descriptions to each other; for the death of Christ breaks down the wall which separates the court of the Gentiles from that of the Jews, and unites them in one holy and harmonious society.

have heard so much. And here you have been introduced to a large and unknown number of faithful servants and messengers of God, sent forth and qualified by him to instruct and reform the world. In former ages their number was small, and the word of God was scarce, when there were few settled teachers in Israel, and only now and then, at different times and in different ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But now, under the gospel dispensation, the Lord gives the word and great is the company of preachers, so that all may learn, and all be edified. You are here introduced to a vast assembly, an host that none can number, who are gathered together to celebrate and to enjoy the gospel feast. You are here joined to the universal church, collected from all nations and from all quarters of the world: you are become members of a community all of whom are heirs of promise, all of whom are entitled to the privileges of the first-born, all of whom are registered as citizens of heaven, how little soever they may be known or noticed upon earth, and all have an equal share in the privileges, the liberties, and the promises of the gospel. You are introduced into a community of which God is the sovereign, under whose just and beneficent reign all his faithful subjects are free and happy: and though he once acknowledged himself in a peculiar sense the God of Israel, he now assumes the character of the universal sovereign, the supreme judge of all the earth, the God of all; the powerful protector and the bountiful rewarder of all

Ch. XII. Ver. 24.

Ch. XII. Ver. 24. individuals, of all nations, who submit to his government, and who bow to the sceptre of his mercy. You are introduced into that holy and happy society who, by the efficacy of the gospel sacrifice, are made for ever free from the jurisdiction and from the condemning sentence of the law. Finally, my brethren, you are introduced to Jesus, the apostle and high-priest of our profession; to him who was the messenger of peace and good-will to men; to him who has sprinkled us over with his own blood, which consecrates us for ever to God, with that blood which, far from calling out of the ground for vengeance, like that of Abel, speaks peace to all, even to enemies, persecutors, and murderers, and, by putting an end to the legal dispensation, abolishes the enmity which hath subsisted among the different divisions of mankind, and united all into one great family, in which, as Moses once acted the part of a faithful servant, so Christ now sustains the character of the elder brother and first-born son, while God himself owns the endearing relation of the kind and impartial parent and benefactor of all.

Surely then, my brethren, you will enjoy your new and happy state with gratitude, will diligently fulfill your duties as children of God, as citizens of the new and heavenly Jerusalem, and will faithfully adhere to the engagements into which you have entered.

5. The writer concludes this section with insisting upon the abolition of the Mosaic institute and

the permanence of the Christian dispensation, the superior excellence of which would not fail to entail the severest punishment upon those who, from corrupt motives, rejected it, ver. 25—29. Ch. XII.

1.) The dispensation of the gospel requires a more serious attention than the law, considering the different circumstances in which they were promulgated, ver. 25.

Beware that ye refuse not[1] *him who is speaking*[2] *to you. For if they escaped not who refused* Ver. 25.

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[1] *Refuse not.*] παραιτησησθε. The same verb which occurs ver. 19: *q. d.* "do not deprecate God's speaking to you as the Israelites did of old." See Peirce. The scenery is still kept up in the author's mind of the delivery of the law to the Israelites from Mount Sinai, and of the gospel to the believers in Christ from Mount Sion.

[2] *Him who is speaking to you.*] τον λαλουντα· "*i. e.* God, who spake (ὁ λαλησας) to our fathers by the prophets, and who in these latter days hath spoken (ελαλησε) to us by his son," ch. i. 1. That God is the person referred to is evident, as Peirce observes, because "the person speaking is he whose voice at Mount Sinai shook the earth, and who had promised by the prophet Haggai, "yet once more, I shake not the earth, but also the heaven." This could not be Christ, because the same person is called by the prophet the Lord of Hosts, and promises that the desire of all nations shall come." *to you.* ὑμιν is the reading of the Clermont manuscript, and of the Syriac version. See Lindsey's *Sequel*, p. 356. Sykes and many others understand *him who speaketh* of Jesus Christ. By *him who spake on earth* they understand either Moses, or the angel of the covenant by whom the law was given; and by *him who speaketh from heaven* they understand the Son of God who came down from heaven, and whose voice then shook the earth. "This," says Archbishop Newcome, "favours the supposition that our Lord was the angel of the covenant who presided at giving the law." At any rate it could not be Moses whose voice shook the earth; and Whitby, Peirce, and others, have proved that it could not be Christ: for he who shook the earth was the same Being who declares by Haggai that "he will shake not only the earth but

Ch. XII. Ver. 25. *him when speaking*[1] *upon earth, much less shall we* escape *if we reject him* now he is speaking *from heaven*[2].

God once descended upon Mount Sinai, and there in awful and terrific pomp he delivered the law to the hosts of Israel. In milder glory he now makes known his will from Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. The doctrine of salvation is now publishing, not in a strain of terror and alarm, but of peace and goodwill; and the most engaging motives are proposed

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the heavens." Now this Being is called repeatedly "the Lord of Hosts," and foretells that the Desire of all nations shall come. But the Lord of Hosts is a title appropriated to God the Father; and the Son is never represented as foretelling his own advent. He who speaketh, therefore, can be no other than God the Father, (even upon the Arian hypothesis,) who delivered the law by Moses from Mount Sinai, and the gospel through Jesus Christ from Mount Sion, as before explained.

[1] *When speaking.*] χρηματιζοντα. "who uttered oracles." Newcome. Peirce contends that this word and its conjugates universally signify in the Old and New Testaments, divine oracles and admonitions. This may be doubted: see Rom. vii. 3. But here no question can arise upon this subject, for the speaker is God himself.

[2] *Speaking upon earth—from heaven.*] At the giving out of the law God spake from earth, from the tabernacle upon Mount Sinai he communed with Moses. He is now speaking from Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the most holy place whither our high-priest is ascended, and where he receives the oracles, the gospel doctrine which he reveals to us. The scenery is still kept up; and by attention to it the whole passage becomes easy and intelligible.—Peirce and Macknight understand the expression, "speaking from heaven," as speaking by the holy spirit sent down from heaven, 1 Pet. i. 12. This is a very rational interpretation; but it is not wanted, and does not suit the connexion. God spake through Moses from the earthly tabernacle on Mount Sinai: he now speaks to us, through Jesus, from the heavenly sanctuary on Mount Sion.

to excite men to the love and practice of virtue. But, if disobedience to the law, a system of terror, and a yoke of bondage, was punished with just severity, and no offender escaped its condemning sentence, how can we hope to escape a severer condemnation, if we contemptuously reject the gospel of Christ, a doctrine of truth and grace, which is recommended to us by the most powerful motives and the most irresistible evidence? We cannot plead, as our forefathers did, that human nature cannot support the terrors of the voice of God. If we deprecate and refuse to hear the messenger who addresses us in these mild and gentle accents, it is because we hate the message itself, and are determined to disobey. O my brethren! above all things beware that you do not, by an obstinate rejection of the gospel invitation, expose yourselves to inevitable ruin. Ch. XII. Ver. 25.

2.) To enforce the argument, there has been a solemn declaration of the abolition of the Mosaic, and of the perpetuity of the Christian covenant, ver. 26, 27.

Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath expressly promised, Yet once more[3] *I am* 26. 27.

[3] *Yet once more.*] This prophecy, here cited from the LXX., is found in Haggai ii. 6, 7. It is thus translated by Archbishop Newcome in his *Minor Prophets.* The oracle is addressed to Zerubbabel, and the people with him who were disheartened when they saw the great inferiority of the second temple to that of Solomon, to encourage them to proceed: "Thus saith Jehovah, God of Hosts, Yet once more in a short time, I will

Ch. XII. Ver. 27. *about to shake*[1], *not the earth only, but the heaven also*[2]. *Now this* expression, *yet once more, signi-*

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shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all the nations. And the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah God of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith Jehovah God of hosts. Greater shall be the glory of this latter house than of the former, saith Jehovah God of hosts. And in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah God of hosts."

The Archbishop, with most Christian writers, interprets this prophecy of the advent of the Messiah after, or previously to, certain revolutions, political or religious, which are here foretold. His presence, as the Desire of all nations, would exalt the glory of the second temple above that of the first. But Dr. Heberden, in an ingenious communication to the learned Primate, subjoined in the notes, advances plausible reasons to prove that nothing more is intended than that "the splendour and riches of this new building should in time be very great;" and judiciously cautions the friends of revelation "against urging weak arguments in its support, which often give birth to the most plausible objections against it:" "And can there," says he, "be a weaker argument than that which sets out with doing violence to the original text in order to form a prophecy, and then contradicts the express testimony of the best historian of those times, in order to show that it has been accomplished?" The writer of the epistle plainly cites the prophecy as foretelling the dissolution of the Mosaic œconomy to make room for the unchangeable dispensation of the Messiah.

[1] *I am about to shake.*] σειω is the reading of some of the best copies and of the LXX., and is approved by Griesbach, ed. 2.

[2] *Not the earth only, but the heaven also.*] Mr. Peirce strangely supposes that "shaking the heaven" refers to some revolution in the celestial hierarchy. Dr. Sykes much more judiciously remarks, "that in prophetic language the heavens are put for the higher powers, for those who enjoy great dignities and honours, and the earth is put for the lower people; and therefore shaking the heavens and earth signifies commotions, distractions, and the overthrowing of men and kingdoms. When the temple was built, God declared by his prophet his intention, once, in no very long time to cause great commotions in Judea, and among all its inhabitants, and not only among them, but in all the known world; and then should the desire of all nations

fieth the changing of those things that are shaken[3], *as of things that had been appointed* for a season[4], *that the things not shaken may continue.* Ch. XII. Ver. 27.

When God descended to deliver the law upon Mount Sinai, the whole Mount quaked exceedingly, Exod. xix. 18, and all nature seemed to tremble in his awful presence: but since that memorable event, and in reference to the age of the Messiah, he has declared by the prophet Haggai (ii. 6), at the time of the building of the second temple, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will

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come. Accordingly, the Messiah came. But before he came, we find the world overturned by Alexander and his captains. And when all these kingdoms were subdued by the Romans, it was justly said that all nations were shaken."

To me it seems most probable, that by *the heavens* the writer here means the Mosaic dispensation. Dr. Priestley however says, "It is almost certain that this prophecy relates to those great convulsions of states and kingdoms which are to precede the setting up of the proper kingdom of Christ."

[3] *The changing of those things that are shaken.*] "σαλευομενων, *shaken*," says Dr. Macknight, "is a metaphor taken from ships which are tossed backwards and forwards by the winds and waves, till they are sunk or beaten to pieces." See also Doddridge on the place.

[4] *Appointed* for a season] Mr. Peirce observes, that ποιειν signifies *to appoint*, Heb. iii. 12, Mark iii. 14, and in many other places; and that the word πεποιημενων being a participle of the preterperfect tense, ought to be rendered accordingly as of things which had been appointed: i. e. *only for a time*, at the end of which they were to undergo a change. Macknight understands the expression as an ellipsis for things *made with hands*, i. e. inferior and imperfect; and applies it both to the heathen and to the Jewish ritual. Mr. Wakefield, after Bos *Exercit.* p. 259, reads πεπονημενων, *worn to decay*. See Wetstein and Bowyer *in loc.* This is an excellent reading, but unsupported by authority. See Griesbach.

Ch. XII. Ver. 27. shake all nations," &c. Observe here, that the emphatical phrase, *this once*, expresses that this concussion is to take place once only, and no more; and therefore, that whatever be the object intended, it is to be shaken down and demolished like a ship that is tossed and broken to pieces by the waves. And you are to understand, that in prophetic language heaven and earth do not signify natural objects, but civil and moral states of things: and particularly concerning those who are and those who are not in covenant with God, Jews and Gentiles: and the fact predicted is, that the Mosaic economy, as well as the heathen idolatry, is to give way to the Christian religion, which is the last dispensation of God to man, and is intended to spread through all nations, and to endure to the end of time.

3.) The writer concludes this section with urging the believing Hebrews to adhere firmly to the gospel, and solemnly warning them of the danger of neglecting it, ver. 28, 29.

28. *Wherefore, since we receive a kingdom*[1] *which cannot be shaken, let us firmly retain the gift*[2], *by*

[1] *Receive a kingdom.*] βασιλειαν παραλαμβανοντες. An allusion to Dan. vii. 18: "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever; even for ever and ever." Peirce observes, that in classic authors the phrase is only used concerning such as became kings, and is to be explained by such texts as Rev. i. 6, v. 10, 1 Pet. ii. 9; where Christians are spoken of as kings. "We do not receive a kingdom," says Dr. Sykes, "over which we are to reign as kings, but we are admitted into a kingdom over which Christ is king, and we subjects entitled to the advantages of it."

[2] *Let us retain the gift.*] εχωμεν χαριν. Whitby observes,

which we may serve God acceptably with reverence Ch. XII.
and pious fear: for even[3] *our God* is *a consuming* Ver. 29.
fire.

It is our happiness, my Christian friends, to live under the new and perpetual dispensation of the gospel, by the faithful profession of which we are made kings and priests unto God, in a kingdom that shall never come to an end: we are advanced to dignities and privileges of which, if it be not our own fault, we shall never be deprived: and all this is the free unmerited gift of God to us. Let us then prize our privileges, and hold them fast; let us adhere firmly to the gospel, which will instruct us how to serve and worship God in the most acceptable manner, and to maintain upon our minds

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"that εχειν is often put for κατεχειν, to *retain* or *hold fast*, 1 Tim. i. 19; and χαρις throughout the New Testament signifies the favour and grace of God tendered to us in the gospel, 2 Cor. vi. 1; so that the import of the words is, Let us continue stedfast in that faith and dispensation delivered in the gospel, as being that alone which renders our persons and services acceptable to God." So Peirce: "let us be stedfast in embracing and adhering to the gospel." Dr. Harwood: "let us inviolably adhere to the gospel." Archbishop Newcome: "*let us hold fast favour*, the gospel with all its gratuitous benefits." "Εχωμεν χαριν sometimes signifies 'let us be thankful." So Luke xvii. 7, 2 Tim. i. 3, Philem. ver. 7." Sykes. "let us have thankfulness." Wakefield. "The sense of adherence to the gospel," as Peirce observes, best "agrees with the great design of his epistle, and what he is perpetually inculcating, that they should be stedfast in their profession of the gospel."

[3] *For even.*] και γαρ. So Wakefield and Macknight. The allusion is to Deut. iv. 24, where Moses reminds the Israelites of the death of Korah and his party: *q. d.* "Good as he has shown himself in sending his son and admitting us to his everlasting kingdom, yet like severe to those who violate his laws." Sykes.

Ch. XII. Ver. 29. that habitual reverence of him which will induce us to live in the practice of universal virtue.

And let us remember, that if we reject the gospel, we reject it at our peril. The Israelites were warned by their great lawgiver not to forget the covenant of the Lord their God, and to relapse into idolatry, for that the Lord their God was a consuming fire and a jealous God, Deut. iv. 23, 24. And let us not flatter ourselves that, under the milder dispensation of the gospel, we can apostatize and sin with impunity. Our God is indeed a God of love; but he is also a God of immutable and impartial justice: and they who slight and obstinately reject his mercy shall inevitably feel the weight of his indignation.

SECTION IV.

THE EPISTLE concludes with practical exhortations, with salutations, and a suitable benediction. Ch. xiii.

1. The writer exhorts to brotherly love, to hospitality, to sympathy, and to chastity, ver. 1—4.

Ch XIII. Ver. 1. *Let brotherly kindness continue*[1].

I have heard with great satisfaction of the bene-

[1] *Brotherly kindness.*] Doddridge observes, that there was "a peculiar propriety in addressing this exhortation to the Hebrew Christians, who were ready to entertain an ill opinion of their Gentile brethren."

volent affection which you bear to each other, and of your mutual readiness to perform kind offices. This is the genuine spirit of the gospel. Let this fraternal affection be extended to all who bear the Christian name, whether of our own or of other nations. Let this generous spirit flourish in full vigour in your hearts, and suffer it to produce its genuine effects. Ch. XIII. Ver 1.

Be not forgetful of hospitality[2]*; for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.* 2.

Be, like your pious ancestors, kind and hospitable to strangers: as far as it may be in your power shelter them in your houses, supply their wants, and protect them from injuries. Of such generous treatment Abraham and Lot have given excellent examples; and their munificence received an ample reward. Their history records that the kind offices which were intended for men, were, unknowingly, performed to angels; and that one of these patriarchs was remunerated by the promise of an heir, and the other by the protection of the lives of himself and his family in a scene of general destruction. Live

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[2] *Hospitality.*] The entertainment of strangers was a virtue of great importance in an age and country in which houses for the accommodation of travellers were not in use. When the writer alludes to the examples of Abraham and Lot, Gen. xviii. xix., who were honoured with a visit of angels, he could not mean to insinuate that similar visits might be expected under the new dispensation, but merely that such a conduct was acceptable to God, and would meet with a proper reward; or perhaps, that the guests so protected and entertained, might possibly in some shape or other make ample compensation for the kindness received.

Ch. XIII. Ver. 2. then in the practice of hospitality: nor shall your kindness to strangers remain without its suitable and seasonable reward; and though you cannot now hope to receive visits from angels, you may nevertheless, perhaps, be sometimes requited far beyond your expectation, even by those who have been the objects of your liberality.

3. *Remember those that are in bonds, as if bound with them; and those that suffer cruel treatment, as being yourselves also in the body.*

You have yourselves been sufferers for truth, and therefore you know the heart of a sufferer: cultivate then a spirit of sympathy. Many of your fellow Christians are now in chains for the gospel; and some have even undergone the most cruel tortures. You are liable to the same sufferings. Think what, in those circumstances, you would desire and expect from your brethren: and now, by your friendly visits, by your salutary advice, by your tender attentions, and by your fervent prayers, administer those consolations, of which, in similar circumstances, you yourselves would stand in need.

4. *Let marriage*[1] *be honourable among you all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*

Let not the rigid and unwarrantable notions of

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[1] *Let marriage.*] Hallett and others have observed that this verse, standing among exhortations, ought to be translated as such. There is probably an allusion in it to the austere sect of the Essenes, who discountenanced marriage. The Alexandrine and Clermont read γαρ, *for*, instead of δε, *but*. See Griesbach.

certain sects among you lead you to think lightly of marriage, or persuade you that a single state is either preferable in itself, or peculiarly acceptable to God. Let virtuous wedlock be held in the highest honour, and let the sacred engagement be maintained inviolable: for know that the heavy judgements of God will fall, not upon an institution which he has himself ordained and blest, but upon those who violate the marriage covenant, or who seduce innocence from the path of virtue. Ch. XIII. Ver. 4.

2. He recommends content, and confidence in Divine Providence, ver. 5, 6.

Let your *conduct* be *free from covetousness. Be content with your condition: for* God *himself hath said*[2], *I will never leave thee, I will never utterly forsake thee*[3]. *So that we may say with courage,* *The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me.* 5. 6.

The love of money, when carried to excess, is dis-

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[2] God *himself hath said.*] The promise is made to Joshua Deut. xxxi. 8, Josh. i. 5; but the writer assumes it as applicable to all good men: as Hallett says, he "justly argues from the unchangeable perfections of God, that he will do like things in like cases. Since therefore God, when he employed Joshua, promised that he would not leave him, any Christian whom God at any time employs in any work, may for the same reason depend upon it that God will never leave nor forsake him."

[3] *I will never utterly forsake thee.*] *ουκ μη σε ανω, ουδ' ου, μη σε εγκαταλιπω,* "I will not, I will not leave thee; I will never, never, never forsake thee." Dr. Doddridge, who notices the emphasis of the original. See also Macknight. "*Est hic in posteriore membro triplex negatio, quæ apud Græcos vehementer negat. Similis sententia* Esa. xli. 13." Grotius.

Ch. XIII. Ver. 6. graceful and mischievous: it is peculiarly so in the professors of the gospel; and especially under circumstances of persecution, or in imminent danger of it. Be not, therefore, infected with this base passion, so as to be induced by it to do any thing unworthy of your character, with a view either to increase or to retain riches. What you can acquire by industry, consistently with honour and integrity, that enjoy, improve, and be content with. And you have reason to be so; for the promise made by God to Joshua (ch. i. 5), that he would never desert him while he continued faithful to his duty, is in a very important sense applicable to all the virtuous, in all ages. And while, conscious of integrity, we rely upon this promise, we may with the Psalmist (Ps. cxviii. 6) triumph in God as our portion, and our protector, and may justly rise above the fear of our enemies, and the dread of distressing want, as long as we persevere in the line of duty.

3. They are exhorted to recollect and to follow the good examples of their eminent departed teachers, ver. 7.

7. *Remember those who presided over you*[1], *who*

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[1] *Remember those,* &c.] The writer here perhaps principally refers to the apostle James, called the Less, a brother or very near relation of our Lord; who, having resided chiefly at Jerusalem, is regarded as the first bishop of that church, and is described as a man of exemplary piety, prudence and goodness. He suffered martyrdom at Jerusalem, probably a short time before this epistle was written. "Bishop Lloyd, in his funeral sermon for Bishop Wilkins, thinks that this may refer to James

spake to you the word of God; whose faith imitate, considering the issue of their course of life[2]. Ch. XIII. Ver. 7.

You, believing Hebrews, have been eminently distinguished by the rank and character of your instructors. Jesus himself laboured and suffered among you, and all his apostles have commenced, and some of them have terminated their labours in your service. The first martyr among the apostles suffered at Jerusalem, Acts xii. 1; and in that devoted city, another who long presided over your assemblies, while the rest of the apostles were commissioned to carry the gospel into distant countries, and who conducted himself with unexampled prudence, and meekness, and zeal, has lately undergone a violent death. Remember such with veneration and affection. Call to mind their pure and salutary doctrine, their unwavering faith, their honourable profession, their undaunted courage, their active zeal, their Christian charity, their suffering fortitude, and, above all, their glorious and triumphant death, in which, so far from renouncing their prin-

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the apostle, and to James, commonly called the first bishop of Jerusalem; both of whom had been put to death there before this epistle was written." Doddridge. "Here," says Dr. Sykes, "St. Paul speaks of those who had ruled over them; whose behaviour and whose personal care of them they were to keep up in their minds. They were men who had spoken the word of God to them, and were now no more." Dr. Lardner reports, that "the apostle James suffered martyrdom in a tumult at Jerusalem A.D. 62." Lardner's *Works*, vol. vi. p. 502.

[2] *The issue of their course of life.*] την εκβασιν της αναστροφης. See Wakefield. "Follow their faithfulness: consider the final consequence of their conversation and behaviour among you." Sykes.

Ch. XIII. Ver. 7. ciples and their profession, they esteemed it an honour to be accounted worthy of suffering in so good a cause. Animated by their example, adhere stedfastly to the same profession, and you shall assuredly in due time be admitted to the same reward.

4. The writer urges a stedfast adherence to the simplicity of the gospel doctrine, ver. 8, 9.

Ver. 8. 9. *Jesus Christ*[1] is *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever: be not carried aside*[2] *by a variety of foreign doctrines*[3]; *for it is better that the heart should be established in grace*[4] *than in meats*[5], *in*

[1] *Jesus Christ.*] "The evangelical doctrine, as delivered by Christ and his apostles." Newcome. That this is the true meaning of the author is evident from the inference which he draws from it: Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. *Christ* frequently signifies the doctrine of Christ. See Acts v. 42, 1 Cor. i. 24, 2 Cor. iv. 5. The writer could not here intend to assert the immutability of the person of Christ, for that would not have been true. "By Jesus Christ," says Dr. Priestley, "in this place, as in some others, is meant not the person of Christ, but his gospel, which the apostle says is the same, and does not vary with the opinions of men; alluding to the novel doctrines of the Gnostics in the next verse."

[2] *Carried aside.*] παραφερεσθε, *carried aside*, not περιφερεσθε, *carried about*, is the true reading. See Griesbach. "This verse is connected with the foregoing: *q. d.* Be not *therefore*," &c. Newcome.

[3] *A variety of foreign doctrines.*] Gr. "by various and foreign;" *i. e.* by insisting upon Jewish ceremonies as necessary to salvation." See Newcome, and Hallett.

[4] *In grace.*] χαριτι. Newcome explains it, "by complying with the rules of the gracious gospel covenant." That *grace* signifies the gospel, see ch. xii. 28, and the note there; also John i. 17, Rom. vi. 14, Gal. iv. 4. *the heart be established:* i. e. that your courage be established. See Macknight. "To be established in grace is to be so convinced of the truth of the gospel, as to persevere steadily in the profession of it." Sykes.

which they who have walked[6] *have not been bene-* Ch. XIII. Ver. 9.
fited by them.

I cannot, my brethren, conclude this epistle without entering an earnest caution against your being misled by those early inveterate prejudices in which you were educated, and by which the pure spiritual religion of our great master is so much in danger of being corrupted. The doctrine of Christ is simple, uniform, and unalterable. What it was in the beginning, that it now is, and such it will continue to be, to the end of time. Adhere, therefore, with unshaken firmness, to those important principles which you have learned from the eminent teachers to whom I have just alluded; and be not deluded into the admission of a mass of notions and practices which are quite foreign to the spirit of the Christian religion, and which are taught by men who have no authority for it. You have many severe trials in prospect; and let me assure you, that you will find that vigour which you will derive from a firm adherence to the genuine principles of that merciful dispensation which has been revealed by Christ, of far greater benefit than any support which you can draw from the strictest observation of Pha-

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[5] *Meats:*] *i. e.* "distinctions about their kind. Col. ii. 21, Heb. ix. 10." Newcome. *q. d.* it is better to fortify the mind by adhering to the moral precepts of the gospel, than by practising the ceremonies of the law.

[6] *They who have walked.*] "The meaning of *walking* is, frequent or constant use of, the spending life in such things. They who constantly used or observed such kind of ordinances, cannot by them make themselves acceptable to God." Sykes.

Ch. XIII. Ver. 9. risaic ceremonies, which, as they have no moral value in themselves, so they have never been found to be of much practical use to the strictest observers of them, either as a security from suffering, or as a support in the season of calamity.

5. In figurative language, borrowed from the Jewish ritual, he represents the superior privileges of the Christian church, ver. 10—12.

10. *We have an altar, of which they have no right to eat*[1] *who perform divine service at the tabernacle.*

11. *For the bodies of those animals*[2], *whose blood being*

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[1] *We have an altar, of which they have no right to eat.*] "To eat of the altar is the same thing as to be admitted to terms of friendship with God. If the question be asked, What is that altar which Christians have? I answer, Not the cross on which Christ suffered; for that can in no good sense be deemed an altar. Nor is it the Lord's table, nor any such thing: it is a figurative way of expressing the thing or manner by which we are made friends with God. It is to be understood from the nature and design of sacrifices. We have the true means of engaging in friendship with God, and of being reconciled to him by Christ, and having our sins passed over, just as the altar was the means of reconciliation and forgiveness under the law. But the Jews, continuing in obedience to the law, cannot have the advantages that we have." Sykes.

[2] *The bodies of those animals*, &c.] See Lev. xvi. 27. 'The bullock for the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp, and they shall burn in the fire.' "He assigns the reason why those who serve the tabernacle could not eat of the Christian altar. For they had no right to eat of any sacrifice but such as was expressly allowed them to eat of, and in consequence they could not eat of the sacrifice on the great day of expiation, which was all to be burned without the camp: now, as to eat of the sacrifice was the sign of being in actual friendship with God, to eat of the Christian sacrifice was to be in friendship with God upon the terms laid down by Christ. And

offered for sin, is brought by the high-priest into the most holy place, are burned[3] *without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify*[4] *the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.* Ch. XIII. Ver. 12.

The priests and Levites, who are employed in the service of the temple, esteem it a great privilege to be fed from the altar, and regard it as a pledge of communion with Jehovah, as a token of his favour, and as a symbol of devotedness to his service. I have shown at large, that we who believe in Christ are priests in a nobler temple, and are carrying on a nobler service, and are consecrated with the blood

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And as it is impossible to partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons, so, in like manner and for the same reason, it is not possible to eat of the sacrifices offered to God in the temple according to the law, and to partake of the Christian altar." Sykes.

The plain meaning of the writer is, that those who persist in relying upon the works of the law for acceptance with God, exclude themselves from the privileges and hopes of the gospel. They cannot be at once both Jews and Christians: this he expresses in sacrifical terms, well understood by the Hebrews to whom he wrote, though not always equally intelligible to modern readers.

[3] *Is brought—are burned.*] These expressions are thought to indicate that the epistle was written while the Jewish temple was yet standing, and divine worship was carried on in it.

[4] *Sanctify,*] ἁγιασῃ, the people with his own blood. "If it be inquired," says Dr. Sykes, "how Christ sanctified the people with his own blood, it was by his blood that the covenant of God was ratified, and the world sanctified through the truth. Such as came into the belief of him as the Christ, were separated from the world to the service of God. They were made a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." "There is no reason to doubt," says Mr. Hallett, "but that the author had here a particular regard to the believing Gentiles, who were to become the people of God as well as the Jews."

Ch. XIII. Ver. 12. of a nobler victim. We also feast upon the sacrifice as a token of our communion and acceptance with God. And in this particular likewise we excel the ministers of the Mosaic tabernacle. They are restrained from feasting on the piacular sacrifice: the victim which is offered on the day of atonement, the blood of which is sprinkled in the most holy place to atone for the sins of ignorance, is carried to the outside of the camp, and totally consumed by fire as the law appoints. But we who serve in the celestial temple are permitted to feast upon our glorious victim, by whose blood, offered once for all, we are sanctified; to eat that flesh which is meat indeed, and to taste of that blood which is drink indeed: and thus to express our fellowship and communion with God, and our devotedness to him.

By which figurative language you will easily see that what I mean to say is this, that while our unhappy countrymen obstinately persist in their adherence to the Mosaic ritual, seeking to please God by ceremonial observances, and wilfully rejecting the offers of the gospel, they never can attain that peace with God, and those blessings and privileges which the gospel of Jesus offers to all who believe in and obey him.

Christ, as I have before stated, is the sacred victim, by the shedding of whose blood the new covenant is ratified and confirmed, and by the sprinkling of which all who believe are consecrated to God: and, in correspondence with other piacular

victims, he suffered without the gate, becoming thus a curse for us. Ch. XIII. Ver. 12.

In other words, he was exposed to the ignominy of crucifixion, and was treated as an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, that all, of all nations, who believe and obey the gospel may be admitted into the holy community of which Christ is the head.

6. Upon this ground he urges the believing Hebrews to be ready to forsake all their former prejudices and connexions, and to follow Christ, ver. 13, 14.

Let us therefore go forth[1] *unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach*[2]. *For here we have not a continuing city*[3], *but are seeking earnestly one to come.* 13. 14.

Jesus our master suffered on Mount Calvary: he was disowned by his countrymen as a blasphemer, he was delivered over to the Romans to be executed

[1] *Go forth:*] *i. e.* let us willingly quit our dependence upon, and our connexion with, the ritual and ceremonial dispensation; or let us contentedly bear to be cast out of communion by our ignorant and misguided brethren. See Hallett. "In imitation of him, let us not hesitate to suffer as he did, however reproachful as well as painful such sufferings may be." Priestley.

[2] *His reproach:*] *i. e.* bearing that which he was reproached for bearing and for having suffered upon, that is, the cross; which, however, the writer does not expressly mention, that he may not offend the feelings of his readers. See Newcome.

[3] *Not a continuing city.*] Some think there is an allusion here to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem: an event which happened about eight years after this epistle is supposed to have been written. "We that believe in Christ are but strangers here, travelling to the heavenly Jerusalem." Sykes.

Ch. XIII. Ver. 14. as a traitor, and was put to an ignominious and accursed death without the walls of the city, as a miserable and abandoned outcast. But let us not desert him in his unmerited disgrace, nor let us be ashamed or afraid of professing ourselves his followers. For his sake, who hath done and suffered all this for us, let us willingly forsake all, let us give up our possessions, our friends, our country, our most deeply rooted and dearly cherished prejudices, and, if it be the will of God, even life itself, in order to secure the blessings of his gospel. Expelled from the communion of our deluded brethren, let us willingly go forth, bearing that cross, which our lord and master is so bitterly reproached for having borne; and let us cheerfully suffer with him, that so we may be glorified together. And be these sufferings what they may, their duration is momentary, and will soon be over: for in this state our residence will be but short. Here we have no resting-place, no quiet peaceable permanent home: banished from the earthly, we are securing to ourselves a habitation in the heavenly Jerusalem, where we hope to enjoy a tranquil, a holy, and an immortal life.

7. As priests of the new dispensation, he exhorts them to present the acceptable sacrifices of thanksgiving and benevolence, ver. 15, 16.

15. *Through him, therefore*[1], *let us offer up* the *sa-*

[1] *Through him, therefore.*] Archbishop Newcome connects ver. 15, 16, with ver. 12, including ver. 13, 14, in a parenthesis. *through him*, δι' αυτου that is, as we have been instructed

crifice of praise unto God continually[2], *that is, the* Ch. XIII.
fruit of our *lips*[3] *which render thanks*[4] *to his name.*
But to do good and to distribute forget not; for Ver. 16.
with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Being admitted to feast upon the rich provisions of a spiritual altar, it is our duty, as priests of this new profession, to offer the sacrifices which our great lawgiver hath enjoined: and these are not either animal victims or the fruits of the earth. The sacrifices of the Christian temple are gratitude to God and benevolence to man. Let us then, as instructed by Jesus, offer to God the daily sacrifice of a warm and a grateful spirit: and to the forms of devotion let us uniformly join the practice of benevolence; contributing, to the utmost of our ability, to the relief and happiness of all around us. These are sacrifices which, if they are presented with a pure heart, will be far more acceptable to God than the fragrance of the daily burnt-offering.

8. The writer recommends becoming respect and deference to their spiritual guides, ver. 17.

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by him; not in any mystical dependence upon a supposed atonement and intercession.

[2] *Continually.*] Probably an allusion to the daily burnt-offering.

[3] *The fruit of* our *lips.*] A citation from Hos. xiv. 2, from the LXX. In the Hebrew, "the *calves* of our lips."

[4] *Which render thanks.*] ὁμολογούντων· "this may either signify giving thanks to God, or, confessing his name, that is, Christ's; owning ourselves to be his disciples." Sykes, who gives the preference to the latter sense.

Ch. XIII. Ver. 17. *Obey those who preside over*[1] *you, and submit*[2] to them, *for they watch for you*[3] *as those who must render an account; that they may perform this* their office *with joy*[4], *and not with mourning, for that* would be *unprofitable*[5] *for you.*

[1] *Who preside,* &c.] These were probably persons of wisdom and experience, who had been chosen to superintend the concerns of the Hebrew church, and to instruct and exhort the people after the death of the apostle James. It is evident from the character which this writer gives of them, and from the respect which he requires to be paid to them, and which indeed he himself shows them, ver. 24, that they were persons of great probity and worth, and well qualified for their office.

[2] *Submit:*] *i. e.* to all their just precepts and admonitions. He could not mean to represent these teachers and guides as possessing unlimited authority over the faith and practice of the Hebrew Christians. This was more than the apostles themselves claimed. 2 Cor. i. 24.—The Pharisees were rigidly exact in external services, but very lax in their morals and in the government of the mind: perhaps some of the Hebrew Christians might think their pastors too severe in requiring a stricter subjection of the affections and thoughts to the rule of duty than the Pharisees did, and to this the writer may possibly allude. See Matt. v. 20, xvi. 6, and Hallett's note upon the text.

[3] *Watch for you.*] In the original, "for your souls:" a hebraism. "*In behalf of your souls* is equivalent to, in your behalf." Newcome.

[4] *With joy:*] *i. e.* perform their office, not give up their account; for the negligence and undutifulness of the hearers could not abate the joy of the faithful minister, whose fidelity and zeal are a fragrant odour to God in them that perish, equally as in those that believe. See Doddridge. So Wakefield: "that they may preside over you with joy."

Nevertheless, Archbishop Newcome and many others interpret the author differently: *q. d.* that they may give up their account with joy, and not with grief. For as in accommodation to our present conceptions the apostle speaks of meeting his converts with joy at the day of Christ; so it is impossible, according to our present mode of thinking and feeling, that a faithful minister should not feel deep regret, if any of those over whom he has watched, and for whom he has laboured, should

Though the Hebrew church can no longer boast of being under the personal superintendence of apostles, and of being instructed by men who were the immediate ambassadors of Jesus, yet they still enjoy the privilege of being directed and taught by wise and faithful men, the successors of those eminent instructors. Let then such persons be treated with the respect and reverence which they deserve. Obey the precepts which they deliver, which, though more pure and strict than those which your most ostentatious sects inculcate, extending even to the affections and the thoughts, are nevertheless positively enjoined by the Christian law, and essential to your

Ch. XIII. Ver. 17.

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be missing on that day, and if it should then be his painful duty to bear his testimony against them. See Newcome and Macknight.

[5] *Unprofitable for you.*] "*i. e.* dangerous." Newcome. Mr. Hallett, after a judicious explanation of the nature and limitations of the advice here given, adds, "From hence we may form this general rule, suited to all ages, viz.—that where pastors in all respects behave themselves as Christians, and so are meet for Christian communion; where they are qualified with sufficient gifts, and faithfully perform the duties of the pastoral office; where they do not lord it over God's heritage, but are examples of all virtue to the flock, and heartily labour to promote the salvation of their people, under a lively apprehension that they must hereafter give up a strict account of their management to the great shepherd, who will either reward or punish them accordingly, as they promote or hinder the salvation of those souls for which he died: where pastors, I say, act in this manner, the people are bound to obey them; that is, to hearken to their good advice, to submit to their just reproofs, as to men who, like their parents, have a right to exhort and reprove them. And no one can think it any manner of evil, or hardship, to submit to pastors of such a character, in attending to their good and friendly admonitions, and in doing the things which are necessary to their own eternal salvation."

Ch. XIII. Ver. 17. acceptance with God. Yield, therefore, to their friendly admonitions; for you know the character of the men. They act not from the love of power, but from a sense of duty. They are accountable to God for the fidelity with which they discharge their trust; and therefore they exercise a vigilant inspection over you, and sometimes, perhaps, impose restraints which you may think burdensome. But place confidence in their superior wisdom, and submit cheerfully to their salutary admonitions: this will refresh and animate their spirits, and they will discharge their laborious and hazardous office with delight. But if you are refractory, their hearts will be discouraged, and their spirits will be oppressed with sorrow. This, however, will be more upon your account than their own. Their faithful labours will be accepted and approved; but wretched will be the lot of those upon whom such labours have been lost, and against whom it will be their painful duty to bear their final testimony.

9. He requests an interest in their prayers, ver. 18, 19.

18. *Pray for us; for we are confident*[1] *that we have*

[1] *Confident.*] πεποιθαμεν. "For though ye may dislike my doctrine, set forth in this letter, I am certain, in teaching it, I have maintained a good conscience." Macknight. It is evident that the Hebrews to whom the epistle was written knew the writer, though we do not, and, as Hallett observes, "his design in not setting his name could not be to conceal himself from them." He was now at liberty, and desired them to pray for his success, that he might the sooner finish his mission among

a good conscience, determined in all things to be- Ch. XIII.
have well: and I the more earnestly intreat you *to* Ver. 19.
do this, that I may be shortly restored to you.

Before I conclude, I request an interest in your prayers, that, like your faithful and vigilant instructors, I also may be diligent in the duties of my office, and may meet with comfort and success in it. You may perhaps be in some measure prepossessed against me, for what you may imagine to be a deficiency of zeal for the institutions of the law: but I assure you that these prejudices are without foundation. I have examined myself thoroughly upon the subject; and I am conscious that it is my earnest endeavour and steady resolution to act upon every occasion in conformity to the strictest fidelity and integrity: and that I have never advanced any thing which I was not well convinced that I was fully authorized to teach and to inculcate. Pray then for my success in the Gentile churches: and I am the more earnest in this request, because it is my intention, when I have finished the object of my ministry here, to make a visit to Judea, and I am anxious to be with you as soon as possible.

10. He solemnly commends the Hebrew Christians to the blessing of God, for the improvement of their character, ver. 20, 21.

Now may the God of peace[2], *who restored from* 20.

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the Gentiles, and be at leisure to make them a visit. See Hallett and Newcome.

[2] *The God of peace:*] *i. e.* "the God that maketh and giveth

Ch. XIII. *the dead the shepherd of the sheep, great by the*
blood[1] *of the everlasting covenant, our Lord Jesus,*
Ver. 21. *make you complete in every good work, that ye may*
perform his will; working in you that which is
acceptable in his sight through Jesus Christ[2]*: to*
him[3] *be glory for ever*[4]*. Amen.*

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peace." Hallett; who observes that, "in styling God the God of Peace he seems to have had a view particularly to the peace which God made between the Jewish and Gentile believers, and his reconciling them both to himself through Jesus Christ." Eph. ii. 14—17.

[1] *Great by the blood,* &c.] Moses, Aaron, Joshua, &c. were inferior shepherds: the covenant which they ratified with the blood of animal victims was a mutable and transitory engagement; but that which Jesus ratified with his own blood was a universal and everlasting covenant, ch. viii. 13. He, therefore, is the great shepherd who superintends the whole flock to the end of time. "The meaning is, that Christ became the great shepherd of the sheep, by means of his voluntary offering of himself as a sacrifice for them, and by giving his blood to confirm the new covenant. It was by the shedding of his blood that he purchased for himself the authority of a shepherd, a governor, or leader, to all believers." Hallett. See Newcome and Wakefield. "That Shepherd of the sheep, great by the blood of the everlasting covenant." Sykes. *Our Lord Jesus:* some copies add Christ. See Griesbach.

[2] *Working in you through Jesus Christ:*] *i. e.* May the principles of the gospel, which is the gift of God, produce these happy moral effects. "God in his good providence so ordering and disposing things, that you may do what is well-pleasing in his sight. See Eph. iii. 16, 17, Phil. ii. 13, Col. i. 11." Sykes. ποιων εν ὑμιν, "doing what is pleasing in his own sight, through Jesus Christ." Wakefield.

Sykes adds, "They had the opportunity, through the gospel of Christ, to work out their own salvation: and the wish is, that God would so direct and govern things as to let them always have opportunity of doing what was acceptable in his sight."

[3] *To him be glory.*] The expression is grammatically ambiguous. Christ is the nearest antecedent: but doxologies to Christ are not usual. To the Hebrews they would be peculiarly offensive. Mr. Hallett justly observes, that God is the principal

And now, my brethren, to draw to a close, may the God of love and peace, who sent his son into the world upon a message of grace, to reconcile sinners to himself, and all the tribes of mankind to each other, by breaking down the wall of separation,—may He who has borne his public testimony to the mission of Jesus our revered master, by raising him from the dead, after he had dearly purchased the honourable title of the great shepherd of the sheep, the prince and leader of the new dispensation, by voluntary submission to an ignominious death, in order to ratify that covenant of peace of which he was the honoured messenger, and to consecrate that holy and merciful dispensation which supersedes all that preceded it, and is to be superseded by none, but is to endure with all its privileges and blessings to the end of time,—may this God of truth, and peace, and love, dispose and enable you to subdue every prejudice, to adhere firmly to the doctrine of the gospel, and to secure the divine favour and approbation, by living in the constant practice of universal virtue, as you have been instructed by Jesus Christ! —And now, to the supreme and only God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the author of peace and reconciliation, the lover of concord, let all of all nations, and of all parties, who are saved

Ch. XIII. Ver. 21.

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person mentioned, and to him probably the doxology belongs.

[4] *For ever.*] τους αιωνας. This is the reading of the Clermont manuscript, and of some others. The common reading is τους αιωνας των αιωνων, *for ever and ever.*

Ch. XIII. Ver. 21. and reconciled by him, harmoniously unite in ascribing blessing, and honour, and everlasting praise. Amen.

11. The epistle concludes with a promise of an early visit, in company with Timothy, and with a brief salutation and blessing, ver. 22—25.

22. *Now I intreat you, brethren, suffer this word of exhortation, for indeed I have written a letter to you in few words*[1].

Before I conclude, I must earnestly request that you will take in good part the freedom of my exhortations and admonitions, which I can assure you were dictated by a sense of duty, and a real concern for your improvement and happiness. I could have added much more, but I was unwilling to trouble you with too long an epistle at once.

23. *Know that* our *brother Timothy is set at liberty*[2], *with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.*

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[1] *I have written a letter to you in few words.*] δια βραχεων επεστειλα. "contracting my epistle as much as I could, not enlarging as I might." Newcome; and so Hallett and Sykes. "I have given you but few commands." Wakefield, limiting the clause to the preceptive part of the epistle. "*Larga se dabat materia, sed ego, quo minus gravis vobis essem, quæ multis dici poterunt, in pauca contraxi.*" Rosenmuller. It cannot be doubted that the writer might have enlarged indefinitely, as long as he pleased, in the same style.

[2] Our *brother Timothy is set at liberty.*] Le Clerc thinks that Timothy was not a prisoner during the life of Paul, otherwise the apostle would not have failed to have mentioned it in his second epistle: and Lardner allows that απολελυμενος may signify *sent abroad on an errand.* Macknight adopts this suggestion, see Matth. xiv. 15, and supposes Timothy to have been sent into Macedonia agreeably to the apostle's expressed inten-

Timothy, my beloved associate, who has been for a short time in confinement for his profession of Christianity, is now at large. This intelligence will, I know, be grateful to you all. He proposes to join me soon, in which case we shall travel together to Judea; but if he does not come speedily, such is my eager desire to see you that I shall not wait for him. Ch. XIII. Ver. 23.

Salute all those who preside over you, and all the saints[3]. *They of Italy salute you. Grace*[4] *be with you all. Amen.*[5] 24. 25.

In the mean time greet affectionately and respectfully, in my name, those reverend persons who, with so much credit to themselves and advantage to you, preside over your spiritual concerns, and present my

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tion, Phil. ii. 19—24, whence he was expected shortly to return. Macknight cites Euthalius among the ancients, and Mill and Lardner among the moderns, as taking the word in that sense. But Dr. Lardner, vol. vi. p. 370, says, "it is not improbable that Timothy might be imprisoned and soon set at liberty again, as divers of Paul's fellow-labourers were:" and he obviates Le Clerc's objection, by the supposition that the Second Epistle to Timothy was written early in the apostle's first imprisonment.

It is remarked by Sykes that Paul often mentions Timothy, sometimes as a brother, Col. i. 1, 2 Cor. i. 1, 1 Thess. iii. 2, at other times as a fellow-labourer; that his name occurs in every epistle except to the Galatians and Titus, and that Timothy is not noticed by any other apostle; which he thinks a presumption that Paul was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

[3] *Saints:*] holy by profession, Christians in general.

[4] *Grace:*] *i. e.* the gospel in its purity and power, the free gift of God to a sinful world.

[5] The postscripts are various, and of no authority: in the most ancient copies they are wanting. They date the epistle from Italy, from Athens, from Rome, from Italy by Timothy, which is contradictory to ver. 23; and one copy adds, that it was written in Hebrew. See Griesbach.

Ch. XIII. Ver. 25. kind salutations to all the members of the Hebrew church. The believers in Italy, who know of my writing, likewise send their fraternal salutations. And now, my brethren, the best wish that I can form for you, and with the cordial expression of which I take my leave of you for the present, is this: May the doctrine of the gospel, the choicest gift of God to man, be diffused among you, and abide with you, in its truth, in its purity, and in its power! Amen.

THE END.

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